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April 2024

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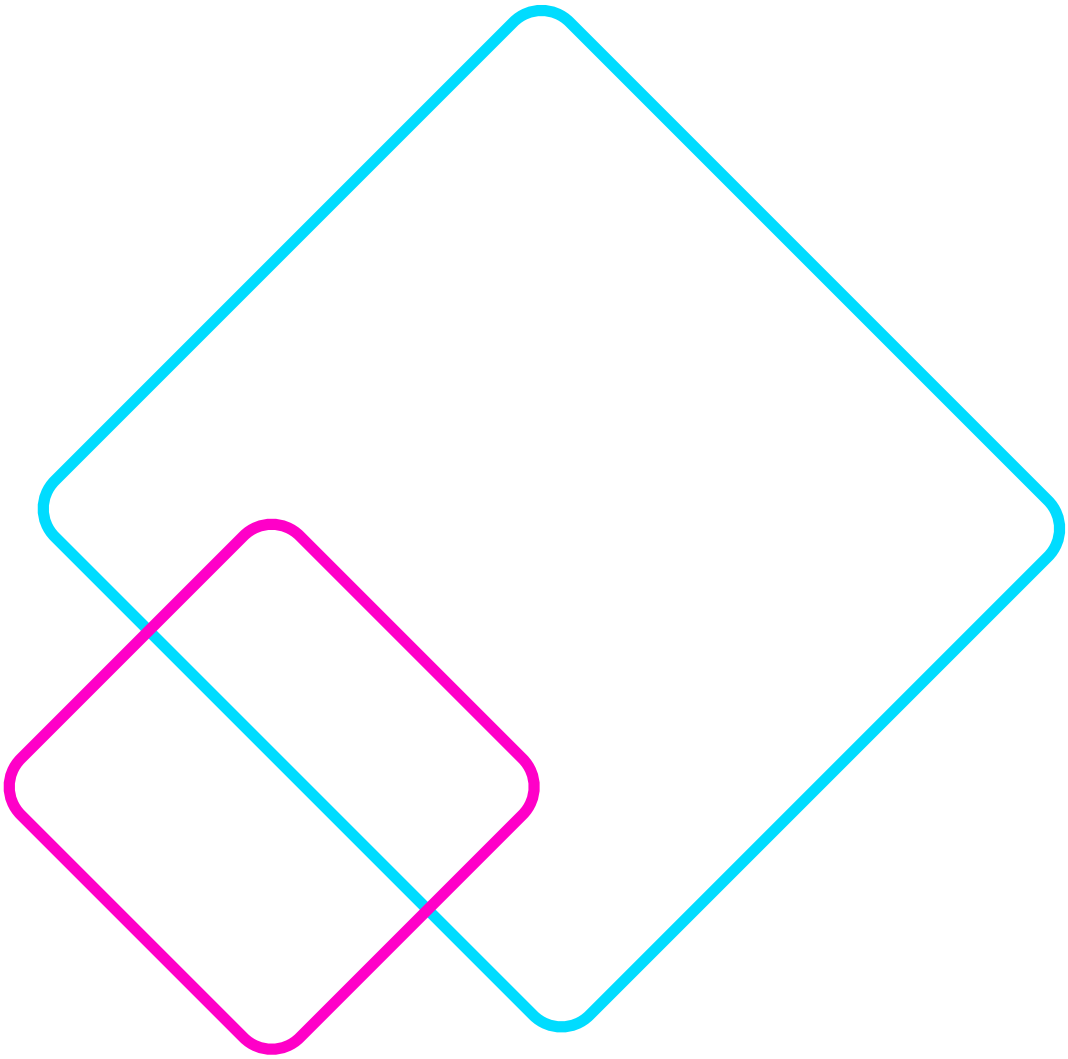

Cultural Relations in Schools: Evolving Practice for a Globalised World

Published by the British Council

British Council
1 Redman Place
Stratford
London
E20 1JQ 2022

www.britishcouncil.org/research-insight

To cite this report:
Learn More. (2024). *Cultural Relations in Schools: Evolving Practice for a Globalised World*. British Council. https://doi.org/10.57884/VHX8-GG95

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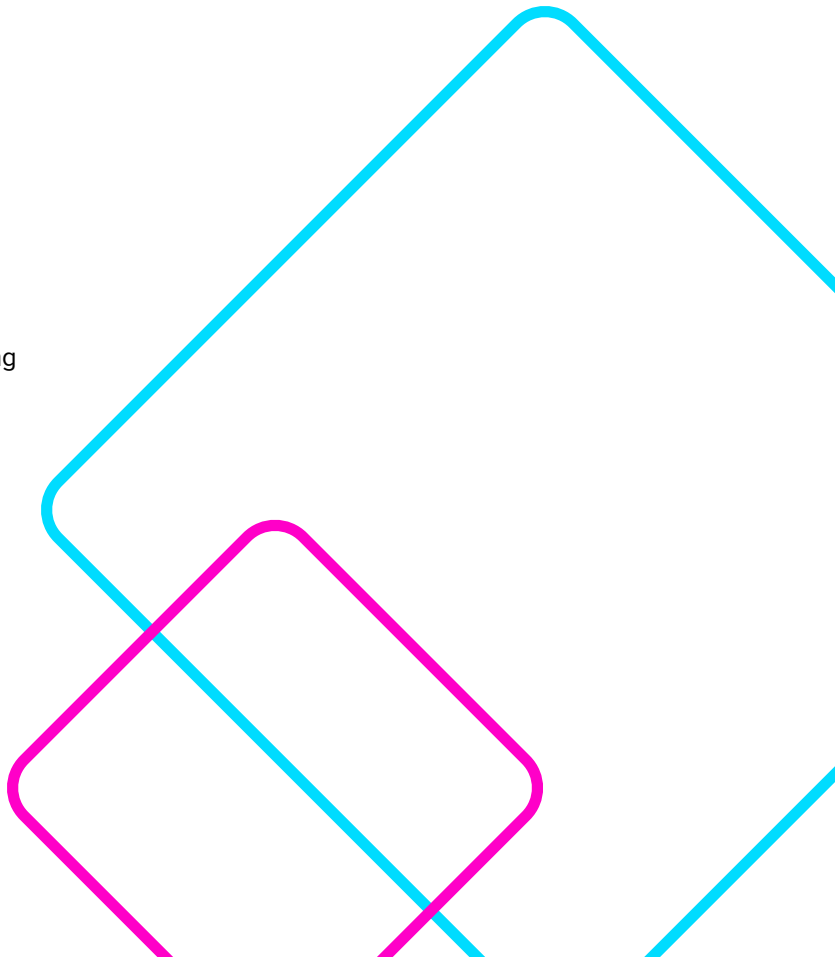
Abbreviations

CBE	Competency-Based Education
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CC	Connecting Classrooms
CIEF	Chinese International Education Foundation
CCGL	Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning
CCSE	Climate Change and Sustainability Education
CEMASTEA	Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education
CTPS	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
DfE	Department for Education
ECA	Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs
EU	European Union
EUNIC	European Union National Institutes for Culture
F2F	Face to Face
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
HIC	High Income Country
HMG	His Majesty's Government
IO	Immediate Outcome
ISA	International Schools Award
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LMIC	Low- and middle-income countries
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MEP	Mandarin Excellence Programme
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NEP	National Education Policy
NFP	Not For Profit
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PAD	The Educational Exchange Service
PASCH	Schools: Partners for the Future
RIDS	Recognition of an International Dimension in Schools
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics
VfM	Value for Money
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCL	University College London



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Executive summary

Introduction and objectives of the study

This study provides an overview of the added value of working internationally with schools through a cultural relations approach. It begins by providing a definition and situating education programming within the broader landscape of cultural relations. The paper then provides an overview of how various cultural institutions conceptualise and integrate cultural relations through schools in their programming. Finally, it analyses the case of the British Council in more depth, providing evidence from its overall programming aims, and from implementation in seven partner countries.

The literature on the value of international education partnerships has, to date, focused largely on cultural diplomacy, soft power and higher education initiatives. This research adds to the current evidence base by focusing on interventions at the primary and secondary level, and by providing a definition of cultural relations through schools that reflects its unique characteristics compared to other similar but distinct approaches. This study defines cultural relations through schools as: 'mutually beneficial partnerships and activities between education systems, meeting today's learning needs to address tomorrow's global challenges'. The proposed definition recognises the long-term nature of societal change, particularly when working with young people and in education system transformation. It therefore distinguishes between Immediate and Medium-Term Outcomes supporting longer-term societal change, as outlined in Section 1.2.

Key findings

Education programmes that apply a cultural relations approach are distinguished by elements of mutuality, sustainable partnerships and a focus on global challenges. This approach is reflected both in direct implementation, through facilitation of exchanges and capacity building initiatives, as well as system-level transformation, through policy design and curriculum review. Applying a cultural relations approach to education initiatives serves to: i) enhance increasingly in-demand skills, knowledge, and attitudes among participants; ii) support internationalisation across education systems; and iii) increase dialogue and collaboration among government partners. In the short term, this fosters closer links between individuals, education systems, and governments in the education field and beyond. In the long term, it creates the preconditions for today's children to grow into a generation of active global citizens.

The cultural organisations sampled as part of the study conceptualise cultural collaboration, including in education, in different ways, integrating it in their programming to varying extents. While organisations that are linked to Ministries of Foreign Affairs —such as in Spain and France — focus on cultural diplomacy activities. Organisations operating 'at an arms' length' from government – such as the British Council and Goethe-Institut – are more closely aligned with our definition of cultural relations. All cultural organisations in our sample[1] except the British Council have a specific focus on language learning and higher education exchanges, although the Goethe-Institut has been implementing a schools' programme, the PASCH initiative, since 2008.

Compared to other organisations, the British Council has a distinctive, much broader range of programming that aims to deliver quality education and which supports internationalisation of both UK and global classrooms. Firstly, it has a strong focus on primary and secondary education, with the potential to impact participants' skills and international outlook in the longer term. Furthermore, its work is based on principles of mutuality and equal partnerships. Uniquely, the British Council's long-standing presence in many of its contexts of operation increases a sense of trust between institutions. The spirit of mutuality which underlies the British Council's approach aligns well with government calls for more equitable partnerships, in order to address global challenges and to move away from unilateral understandings of development assistance. This

1 The sample includes a document review of the organisational mission and programming of the Institut Français, Alliance Française, Instituto Cervantes, and Confucius Institute. The study also included interviews with representatives of cultural organisations from Alliance Française, Institut Français, Instituto Cervantes and Goethe-Institut, reflecting a stronger focus on the work of these four institutions.

strategic shift was outlined in the UK Government's 2023 White Paper on International Development[2] and the focus on systemic change supports policy reform that responds both to local priorities and to global effective practice, as exemplified by alignment with partner governments' strategies on STEM and digital education policy in several case study countries.

The British Council's work with schools also has added value for education in the UK. In close collaboration with the Department for Education in England and the UK's devolved administrations, it promotes an international outlook in UK schools by providing teachers and school leaders with opportunities to learn from global practice, through exchange programmes for UK teachers and school leaders within the UK and abroad (for example, through the Building Educational Bridges programme between England and Singapore); contributes to innovation and internationalisation of the UK school systems by fostering innovation in curricula (for example through the Modern Foreign Languages and Mandarin Excellence Programme); and enhances global competences of students through face to face (F2F) exchange experiences. Notable examples include COP 28 simulations and the Liverpool Eurovision Exchange.

Lessons learned

While cultural relations through schools holds potential for positive changes at the individual and systems level, there is limited robust evidence on the benefits to participants and to education systems. Existing studies are limited in scope, often relying on small samples and relatively anecdotal evidence. Evidence has focused more on the skills developed through cultural relations activities, rather than on underlying principles of trust and mutuality.

Mutuality is a key underlying principle of cultural relations in schools, with some unexplored potential for implementation in practice. Programming needs to account for local priorities in all aspects of its design and delivery. Simultaneously, it is important to generate further evidence on in-country stakeholders' views of cultural relations activities and how mutuality is understood by all sides. This entails focusing on promoting the recognition of mutual benefit, particularly among high-income countries – including the potential to learn from innovations emerging from LMICs.

Although the British Council appears to have a unique and central focus on cultural relations through schools, there is potential to reinforce collaborations with organisations that align with its mission and vision. Other cultural institutions, such as the Goethe-Institut, present important similarities and potential synergies. Further collaboration with organisations that are aligned with at least key elements of the cultural relations approach could add to the overall development and innovation within the cultural relations space, including in programming through schools.

2 International development in a contested world: ending extreme poverty and tackling climate change, a white paper on international development. UK Government, November 2023.

With its long-standing experience, in-country presence and know how, there is potential for the British Council to be an even more prominent actor and thought leader in the cultural relations through education space. Especially when considering the increased focus on mutuality and collaboration within the UK's international development strategy, the British Council can support programming, knowledge generation and dissemination that is closely aligned with donor priorities going forward. A particular strength relates to the the long-standing relationships developed by the British Council's country offices.

Recommendations

Measurement and evidence building on both the intrinsic and instrumental value of cultural relations in schools need to be enhanced. The British Council is uniquely placed to contribute to the global evidence base on the effects of applying a cultural relations approach to education programming. In practice, this could mean ensuring all projects are linked to the overarching cultural relations framework and that they have clear Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plans, including data collection among stakeholders and participants. A stronger focus on process evaluations could strengthen the evidence on the 'how', and not just the 'what' of cultural relations. Future evaluations could also include a Value for Money (VfM) analysis as part of their efficiency assessment.

Programme design and partnerships should be tweaked to truly reflect the spirit of mutuality. There is increasing appetite in the international education space for learning partnerships that are truly mutual, and the UK cannot play its part in addressing internal and global challenges without being more open to knowledge from other countries. There is appetite among UK Government Departments for approaches which strengthen this collaboration, and which bring added value to the UK education systems and broader society. We recommend investing in the

evaluation of the added value of international partnerships and learning programmes to UK students, as well as in raising awareness of the role of cultural relations and its mutual benefits in the UK.

The British Council could strengthen collaboration with the Goethe-Institut specifically, identifying areas of synergy and tapping into each organisation's networks of expertise. Among the organisations in our sample, the Goethe-Institut emerged as the most closely aligned with the British Council's way of working, and had the most potential for further collaboration. Collaborating could not only add value in terms of the global debate on cultural relations through schools, but also offer avenues to further tap into EU funding.

There is a need for stronger internal Knowledge Management to add value to the global debate. Through investment in evidence building and internal capacity building, there is potential for the British Council to become a true thought leader and the 'go-to' institution for international education programming that features a cultural relations approach. The British Council could be a particularly effective partner for the UK government going forward, if it successfully taps into and communicates its existing knowledge base. This process will entail asking challenging questions about effective inclusivity of practices, power dynamics inherent to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) programming, VfM of cultural relations programmes, and sharing knowledge about what has gone well or less well in supporting education through cultural relations.

Introduction

The overall objective of this research is to investigate the value added by a cultural relations approach to working with schools. It does so through evidence on the work implemented by different global cultural organisations, both in a sample of partner countries and in the UK. This research is explored through a high-level analysis of the work undertaken by a sample of international cultural organisations, including an in-depth case study of the British Council's work in international education partnerships.

This paper provides new findings to complement the Strategic Evidence Plan developed by the British Council in June 2023 as well as an internal 2022 **study commissioned by the British Council** to explore how its work in education showcases a cultural relations approach, and with what results.[3] Building on previous research on the topic, this study provides a definition reflecting the unique characteristics of the cultural relations approach and provides further evidence on its added value within education programming. The detailed research questions and methodology are provided in Annex 1. A detailed Research Framework is provided in Annex 2.

The findings presented in this paper are based on:

- **A thorough review of literature and available documentation** on cultural relations and international education programming.
- **A landscape mapping** of how cultural relations are conceptualised and reflected in programming, including through schools, among a sample of cultural organisations, with a stronger focus on Alliance Française, Institut Français, Instituto Cervantes, the Goethe-Institut and the British Council.
- **Key informant interviews** with respondents from the British Council's headquarters and country teams, as well as a small number of in-country partner representatives, focusing on seven case study countries (Albania, Brazil, India, France, Kenya, Spain and Lebanon).[4] In-country partner representatives included headteachers, teachers, and NGO staff. The study entailed a small number of interviews with respondents from other sampled cultural organisations.

The research team encountered some limitations affecting its findings. Limitations include low responsiveness from respondents, especially among in-country partners, the small sample of countries, and the scarce quantitative evidence available. These limitations suggest caution in generalising our findings and highlight areas for improvement in future studies. See Annex 1 for a more comprehensive overview of our sample and of the study limitations. The report is structured as follows:

- **Section 1** provides an overarching definition of cultural relations and of cultural relations through schools, discussing the added value of this approach to international education initiatives.
- **Section 2** provides an overview of the British Council's own conceptualisation of cultural relations, including how these are reflected in its schools programming.
- **Section 3** provides emerging evidence on the value of the cultural relations approach to schools programming in seven case study countries.
- **Section 4** closes with conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations on the application of cultural relations to education work.

3 The Strategic Evidence Plan is an internal British Council document.
4 Please note we have removed China from the case study sample due to the lack of British Council programming focusing on schools in the country. We have, however, included evidence on the Mandarin Excellence Programme in our discussion of the added value of international education programming for students in the UK.

1 What are cultural relations through schools?

The role of cultural relations in fostering peace and prosperity, building connections, and increasing trust and understanding is more important than ever in today's fragmented and crisis-affected world. While cultural relations share some commonalities with cultural diplomacy and soft power, they have important distinguishing characteristics. In this paper we define cultural relations, following the British Council and Goethe-Institut's definitions, as 'reciprocal transnational interactions between two or more cultures, encompassing a range of activities conducted by state and/or non-state actors within the space of culture and civil society'.[5] Working through schools to achieve cultural relations goals is particularly effective because of the potential to upskill and influence the next generation; contributing to the spirit of mutuality and longevity of cultural relations activities. Thus, we define cultural relations in schools as 'mutually beneficial partnerships and activities between education systems, meeting today's learning needs to address tomorrow's global challenges'. Sampled cultural organisations have a strong focus on promoting international exchanges in various cultural fields. Exchanges through schools programming at primary and secondary level remain a more limited area, except for the British Council.

1.1 Cultural relations in an increasingly complex world

1.1.1 Why cultural relations?

Cultural relations have grown in prominence in recent years due to the challenging and polarised global economic and political climate, in what has been dubbed a 'polycrisis' (UNICEF, 2023): multiple, simultaneous crises that are strongly interdependent. This includes rising threats to global security and stability triggered by rapid technological change, economic recession, distrustful electorates, and growing nationalisms (Chatham House, 2020). The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflict in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, Ukraine and the Middle East, have further exacerbated these trends (Ouchtati, Fiaschi, Isernia, & Kirjazovaite, 2023). As a result, the international system is often described as increasingly fragmented, competitive, and polarised (HM Government, 2021). Governments are confronted more than ever with the question of how to manage relationships, so as to promote dialogue and cooperation (British Council & ICR Research, 2021).

Cultural relations are seen as key to addressing these complex and inter-connected challenges. In 2016, the European Union highlighted the link between cultural exchanges, economic growth, job creation and competitiveness within and outside the EU (European Commission, 2016). At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC) network jointly advocated for the importance of cultural relations in promoting dialogue and global solidarity in the face of crisis (EUNIC, 2020). Cultural relations and exchanges have been described as crucial for peace, stability, and development (ibid.), in a 'triple nexus' approach that could connect humanitarian, development and peace actors (Baltà, 2021). Cultural relations have an important role in promoting empathy, developing connections, and supporting decentralisation and decolonisation.

5 Cultural relations in societies in transition, A literature review. British Council and Goethe-Instut. February 2018.

1.1.2 Defining cultural relations

Cultural relations refer to the mutual exchange of culture between people to develop long-term relationships, trust and understanding, with the purpose of generating goodwill and influence abroad (Rivera, 2015). While cultural diplomacy and soft power promote culture and values to advance national interests (Isar, 2010), cultural relations aim to foster understanding and stronger relationships among different cultures, supporting the development of peaceful and sustainable communities (Imperiale, 2019). National interest plays an indirect though still important role: the effectiveness of cultural relations activities lies in its autonomy from political influence and foreign policy objectives (Rivera, 2015). The notion of 'culture in external relations' shows a commitment to the value of global cultural citizenship, going beyond purely instrumental motives (Garner, 2017).

For the purpose of this research, our starting point is the British Council's and Goethe-Institut's definition of cultural relations, outlined in Box 1 (British Council & Goethe-Institut, 2018). In this report, we refer to all programming that fosters mutual understanding, connectivity, and deeper relationships through cultural exchange as cultural relations, even where other institutions may use different terminology (see Section 1.3).

Cultural relations include a broad domain of 'people-to-people' activities, ranging across art, culture, languages, science and education (McPherson, McGillivray, Mamattah, Cox, & Normann, 2017). Educational activities are an important avenue to foster partnerships, dialogue, and exchanges (British Council & International Cultural Relations, 2021).

Box 1: Definition of Cultural Relations

'Cultural relations are understood as reciprocal transnational interactions between two or more cultures, encompassing a range of activities conducted by state and/or non-state actors within the space of culture and civil society. The overall outcomes of cultural relations are greater connectivity, better mutual understanding, more and deeper relationships, mutually beneficial transactions and enhanced sustainable dialogue between people and cultures, shaped through engagement and attraction rather than coercion.' (British Council & Goethe-Institut, 2018).

1.1 A cultural relations approach to schools programming

1.1.3 The role of cultural relations through schools

In today's complex world, education is a means to protect social cohesion and equip younger generations with the tools to navigate the future in collaborative ways (United Nations, 2023). A cultural relations approach to working with schools can support this aim in three ways: i) directly involving students in international exchanges and experiences; ii) developing the capacity of teachers to integrate effective practices in the classroom; and iii) supporting internationalisation of the education curriculum. This section discusses all three strategies.

Applying cultural relations to schools programming aligns closely with international education priorities; namely, the 2030 Agenda, and particularly Target 4.7 of the SDGs: Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship.[6] One way to achieve these goals is through Global Citizenship Education (GCE), which aims to develop 'knowledge, skills and attitudes that cultivate tolerance, respect and shared sense of belonging to one global community, with the ultimate goal of ensuring human rights and peace'[7] (UNESCO, n.d.). Linked to this concept are global competencies: the capacity to examine global, local, and intercultural issues; to understand and appreciate others' perspectives (Therese, 2021); and to have effective interactions with people from different cultures (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). These skills are often described as more important than ever for today's pupils (Lorenzo Galés, Mercer, Hockly, & Stobart, 2020). Education can also help achieve other goals set out in Agenda 2030, including those around peaceful coexistence and protection of the environment (Collins & Martinez, 2023); (IDEES, n.d.).

6 Target 4.7 is as follows: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development (global-goals.org, n.d.).

7 For additional information, please see: https://www.unesco.org/en/global-citizenship-peace-education

More broadly, large-scale societal change is seen as leading to a pressing need to focus on 21st century skills[8], in a variety of contexts – including both high-income country (HIC) and low- and middle-income country (LMIC) settings (Joynes, Rossignoli, & Amonoo-Kuofi, 2019). International institutions have recognised the importance of 21st century skills for some time, including collaboration, creativity and problem-solving (World Economic Forum, 2015); (Scott, 2015). These skills are seen as key for young people to participate actively in today's global knowledge society, as well as to contribute to addressing global challenges (Foster, 2023).

There is increasing demand to help meet these needs: only one in four teachers feel they have the knowledge and skills to integrate GCE concepts in the classroom (UNESCO & Education International, 2021). Moreover, there are growing calls for educational activities to include a focus on themes as diverse as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, oceans, food security and sustainability, among others. Education systems can foster knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours allowing individuals to be agents of change within their communities (UNESCO, 2023). Cultural institutions have an important role to play in supporting collaborations aligned with global education ambitions.

1.1.4 Defining cultural relations through schools

Despite their importance, there is currently no agreed definition of education initiatives with a cultural relations approach. Through primary and secondary data analysis, we have proposed a working definition of cultural relations through schools that we will use throughout this paper (see Box 2). This was developed following a literature review of academic and non-academic articles, and of schools programming carried out by main cultural organisations. It was also informed by interviews with stakeholders from the sampled cultural institutions (see Annex 1 on Methodology).

Box 2: Defining working internationally with schools through a cultural relations approach

> Cultural relations through schools are mutually beneficial partnerships and activities between education systems, meeting today's learning needs to address tomorrow's global challenges.

This definition of cultural relations through schools adds to a rich literature on cultural diplomacy and soft power through international education. Though linked to these concepts, cultural relations present distinct nuances.

Promoting education has been described as a strategic, long-term approach to building a country's soft power (Nye, 2004), and to build potential future relations between countries by reaching younger generations (Wojciuk, Michalek & Stormowska, 2015). Portland's Soft Power Index[9] (McClory, 2018) includes education as a key component, in that 'the ability of a country to attract international students, or facilitate exchanges, is a powerful tool of public diplomacy that delivers returns well into the long-term' (Gauttam, Singh, Singh, Bika, & Tiwari, 2023). Here, students taking part in exchanges can be described as 'carriers of public diplomacy' (Hajdari, Krasniqi, Limani, & al., 2024). At the same time, international education is also seen as having a role in building tolerance, non-discrimination, and intercultural communication (Bergan & Land, 2010).

8 '21st century skills' refer to a broad set of skills, abilities and learning dispositions considered to be critical for success for society and employment in the 21st century. One of the most popular frameworks for 21st century skills is the one developed by the Partnership or 21st Century Learning (P21), accessible at: https://www.battelleforkids.org/insights/p21-resources/

9 The Soft Power Index compares the relative strength of countries' soft power, across six categories: Government, Culture, Education, Global Engagement, Enterprise, and Digital. Further information on countries included and the detailed methodology is available at: https://softpower30.com/what-is-soft-power/

For the purposes of our definition, we understand cultural relations through schools as integrating elements of both soft power and cultural diplomacy. A cultural relations approach to working with schools supports mutual partnerships and transnational collaboration in the following broad areas:

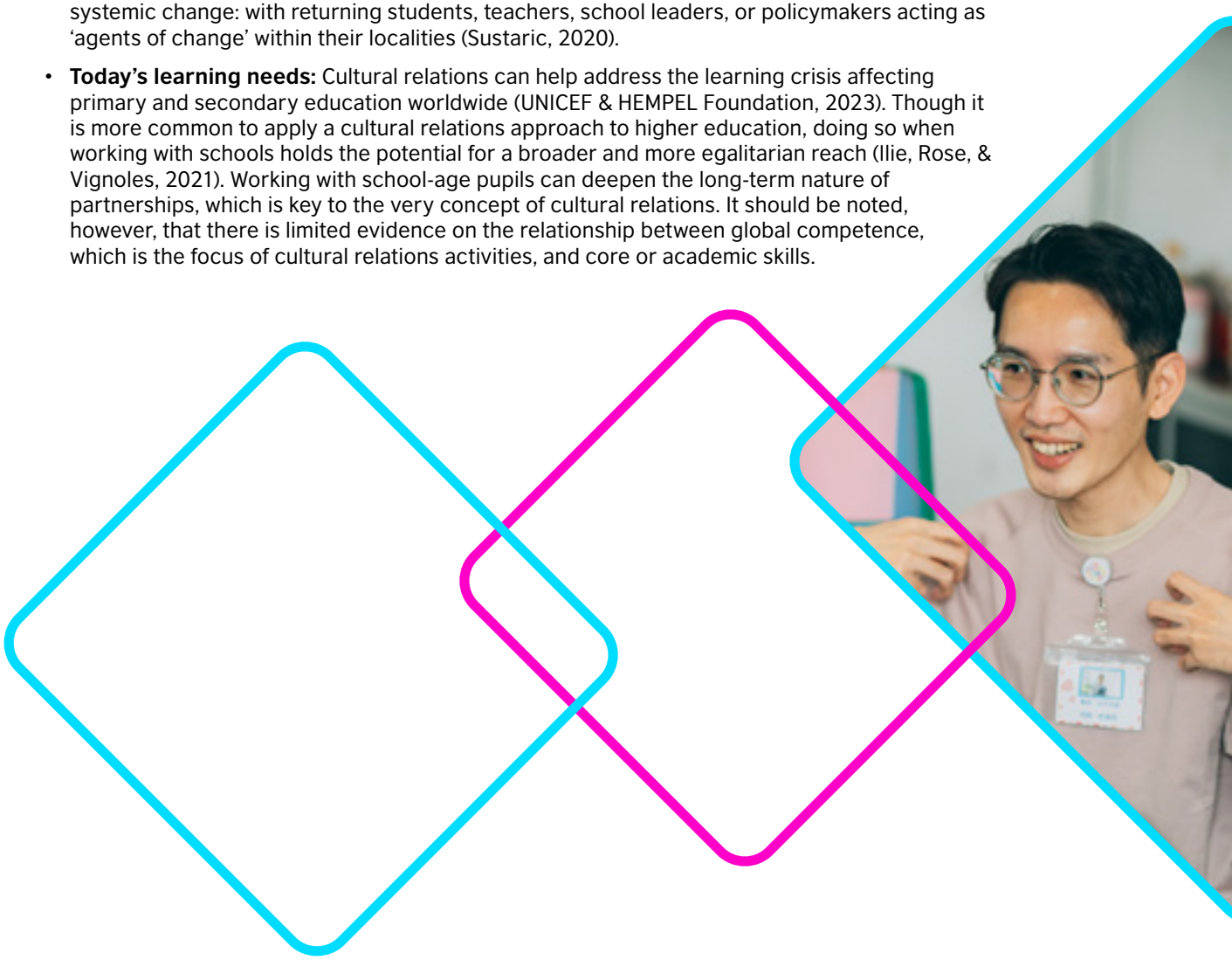
- **Learner-centred collaboration:** directly involving pupils in schools through peer learning opportunities, cross-country research projects, exchanges, and visits.
- **Collaborations among communities of practice and/or professional networks:** which can include teachers, school leaders, education officers and/or policymakers.
- **Cooperation in policymaking:** with two or more partners contributing to education policy and curriculum development at regional, state, or supranational level.

The goal of activities employing a cultural relations approach is to build sustained interactions, understanding, relationship and dialogue between individuals and communities from different countries to achieve more peaceful and cohesive societies in the face of global challenges. Cultural relations through schools contribute to this overarching aim, supporting the next generation through quality education outcomes (see Section 2.2.3 below).

Cultural relations through education do not necessarily have an explicit ambition to deliver Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) goals, as they promote cultural relations among countries more broadly and do have a specific focus on LMICs. However, a cultural relations approach can be applied to international development programming, including interventions that focus on education.

The definition includes four distinctive elements underlying the cultural relations through school approach:

- **Mutuality:** Activities should bring mutual benefit to all parties involved in the partnership. Engaging with policymakers and partners through a cultural relations approach means jointly identifying solutions to education challenges and working together to address them. In sharp contrast with unidirectional capacity building, which has traditionally featured in international education programming (FCDO, March 2023) under the ODA umbrella, cultural relations mean learning from one another's experience, expertise, and challenges. They also mean co-designing collaborations and solutions that reflect both parties' priorities and contexts. Mutuality also recognises equal value of different cultures, supporting the creation of long-term relationships based on 'respect, openness and preparedness to change one's own mind.' (Rose & Wadham-Smith, 2004).
- **Education systems:** Cultural relations do not only focus on individual-level exchanges, but on supporting policy development, through partnership and collaboration, at all levels of policy enactments,[10] from the global level to the individual one. This partnership approach supports scalability of efforts, sustainability, and systemic change, with strong implications on the potential reach of these activities and their continuation past the duration of a specific initiative or exchange. Taking part in education activities also has the potential to lead to systemic change: with returning students, teachers, school leaders, or policymakers acting as 'agents of change' within their localities (Sustaric, 2020).
- **Today's learning needs:** Cultural relations can help address the learning crisis affecting primary and secondary education worldwide (UNICEF & HEMPEL Foundation, 2023). Though it is more common to apply a cultural relations approach to higher education, doing so when working with schools holds the potential for a broader and more egalitarian reach (Ilie, Rose, & Vignoles, 2021). Working with school-age pupils can deepen the long-term nature of partnerships, which is key to the very concept of cultural relations. It should be noted, however, that there is limited evidence on the relationship between global competence, which is the focus of cultural relations activities, and core or academic skills.



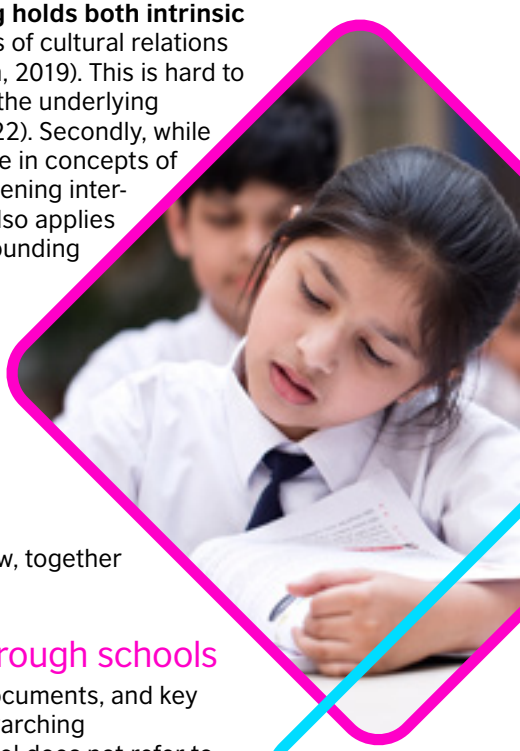
10 The concept of 'middle space' of 'policy enactments' where the education policy reforms are articulated, negotiated, and implemented is developed (Unterhalter & North, 2018).

- **Tomorrow's global challenges:** A final, and crucial, aspect of cultural relations through schools is to prepare education systems, and their participants, to tackle global challenges. This means that cultural relations through schools have the potential to impact society, in creating '*global citizens*' with the tools and interest to address some of the world's most pressing challenges. The definition takes into account the fact that such changes will not be immediate: rather, the focus is on equipping individuals with the skills for system transformation, for which results are only visible in the longer term (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021); (Sengeh & Winthrop, 2022); (Tarozzi, 2023).

1.1.5 Desired outcomes of working with schools through a cultural relations approach

This section provides a high-level logic model for cultural relations through schools. The model does not reflect the work carried out by any particular cultural institution and would require tailoring to match goals and activities conducted by British Council and others. Cultural relations include different types of activities promoting exchange of knowledge, cross-cultural dialogue and mutual trust-building which are, by definition, difficult to quantify (British Council, 2022). Due to the multi-faceted definition of cultural relations through schools, it is challenging to conceptualise its desired results.

Firstly, applying a cultural relations approach to education programming holds both intrinsic and instrumental value (British Council & Goethe-Institut, 2018). The process of cultural relations leads to improved perceptions, relationships, and trust among partners (Singh, 2019). This is hard to measure as evaluations tend to focus on programmatic activities, rather than the underlying approach – 'what' is being implemented, rather than 'how' (British Council, 2022). Secondly, while promoting government interests is not the main aim of cultural relations (unlike in concepts of soft power in international education), there remains a component of strengthening inter-government relations and pursuing national priorities (Imperiale, 2019). This also applies to specific policy goals in education. Further discussion on the evidence surrounding the results of cultural relations activities is provided in Sections 2 and 3.



In this study, we consider Immediate and Medium-Term Outcome-level changes to take place at three distinct but interconnected levels.

- Individuals taking part in activities (which can refer to pupils, education professionals or policymakers).
- The education system in each country.
- Broader government ambitions and national policy goals.

A high-level logic model and corresponding outcome areas are provided below, together with a brief overview of existing evidence for each of these outcome areas.

1.1.6 Constructing a logic model for cultural relations through schools

Through an-depth literature review of academic sources and programming documents, and key informant interviews, we developed a logic model that aims to reflect the overarching characteristics of cultural relations through schools. Please note that the model does not refer to the activities or Theory of Change (ToC) of any one specific cultural institution, but it provides an overarching framework for cultural relations. Therefore, not all areas will be relevant to all cultural institutions active in this space.

As shown in Figure 1, the Medium-Term Outcome leading to the overarching goal of building long-term partnerships between individuals and countries is:

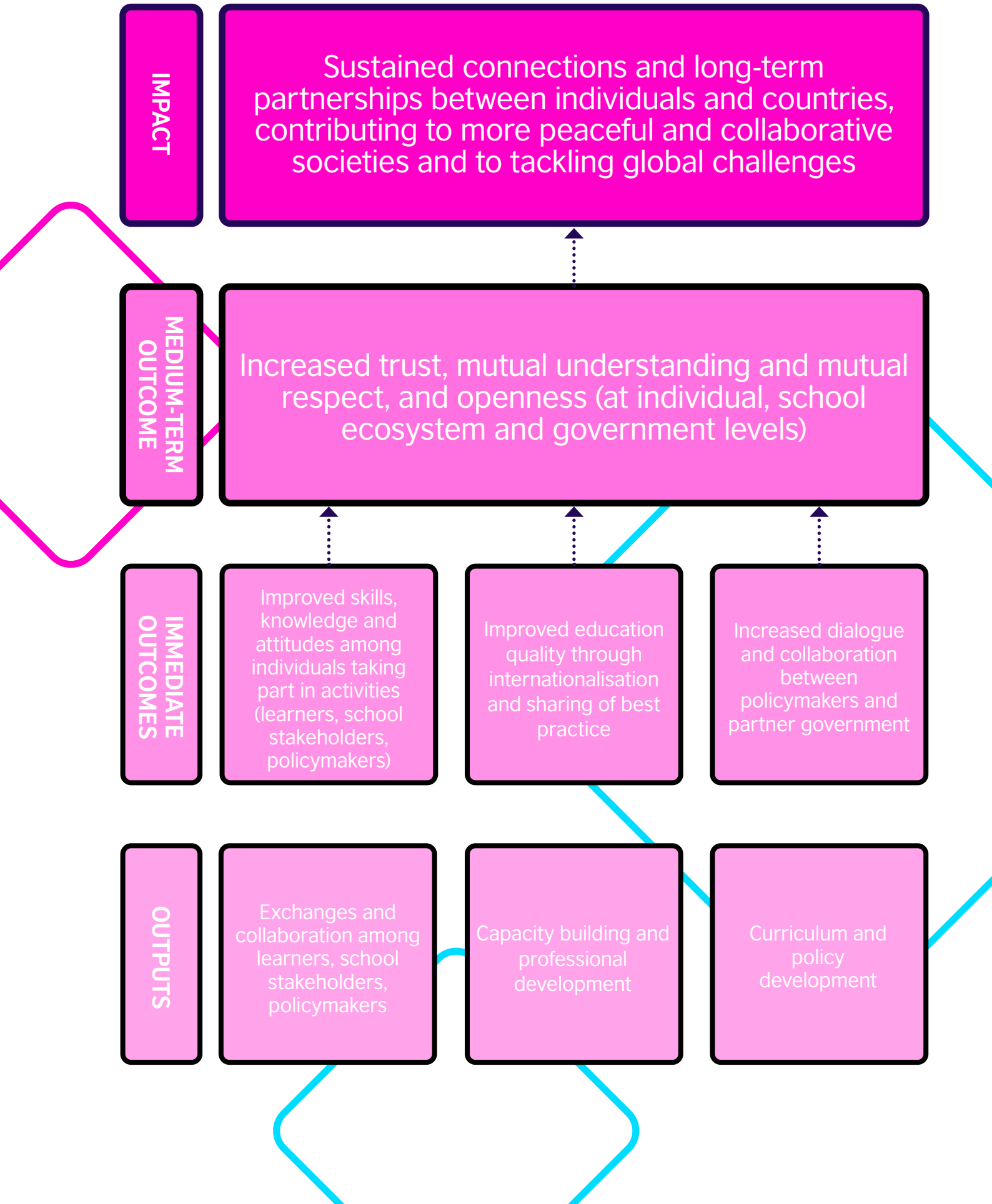
Increased trust, mutual understanding, and collaboration (at individual, school system and government levels)[11].

This Medium-Term Outcome is achieved through three distinct but interlinked Immediate Outcomes (IO), each of which is outlined below.[12]

11 Cultural relations through schools ultimately contribute to long-term partnerships at the individual, collective, and country level. They support global aims for more peaceful, collaborative societies able to tackle collective challenges Contributing to countries' soft power is an underlying and secondary aim. Cultural relations through schools can improve participating countries' reputation and global influence, showcasing expertise and government priorities in education and beyond (British Council, 2022).

12 Please note that not all of these outcomes will be relevant for all cultural relations through schools programming. This framework requires tailoring to specific activities that apply this approach.

Figure 1: Logic model for cultural relations through schools programming



Immediate Outcome (IO) 1 – Individual level changes: Improved skills, attitudes and behaviours for individuals taking part in activities, be they pupils, teachers, and other school stakeholders, such as school leaders or policymakers.

The first strategy to integrate cultural relations through schools programming is direct participation in peer learning opportunities, cross-country projects, and exchanges. Recent studies have found that taking part in international activities improves young people's prospects, including employability (Sisavath, 2021). Taking part in international exchanges and activities is instrumental to strengthen language learning, soft skills, and academic performance. At the same time, it also has intrinsic benefits in the form of connection and cultural understanding. The literature points to mindset changes resulting from this type of activity among pupils, in terms of international outlook, increase in open-mindedness and awareness of social issues (Sustarsic, 2020). Through contacts with peers in different contexts, students can grow in global and cultural awareness, expanding their horizons even through short-term interactions (Gaia, 2015).

Similarly, teachers taking part in international exchanges, peer learning, and cross-country projects can improve their professional and interpersonal skills, with positive effects on their teaching practice (Moorhouse & Harfitt, 2021). Recent research has argued that this increased confidence, motivation and open-mindedness can influence classroom behaviour through expanded perspectives and a greater awareness of social issues (The Alberta Teachers' Association, 2021). These improvements in global understanding and intercultural awareness can have long-term effects (Weichbrodt, 2014); (Sustarsic, 2020).

The specific skills supported by a cultural relations approach to working with schools will vary depending on the project design. The categories of skills that can be developed through this approach include:

- **Global Competence and Mutual Understanding:** increase in global awareness and global competence, empathy, cultural sensitivity, and openness to others, deriving from a mindset shift and increased understanding of global interdependence. These ultimately result in openness, understanding of different cultures, increased positive perceptions and respect for diverse backgrounds.
- **21st Century Skills, Life skills or Soft Skills:** such as self-confidence, creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking (Thornhill-Miller, et al., 2023) resulting from direct participation in cultural relations activities. Skills improvements can also be achieved by supporting teachers and other education stakeholders to integrate life skills curricula in the classroom. They ultimately support students' employability, future mobility and prospects in an increasingly globalised world (Karaca-Atik, Meeuwisse, Gorgievski, & Smeets, 2023).
- **Core or Foundational skills (where relevant):** improvement in specific subjects targeted by a programme applying cultural relations approaches to education activities. This can include language learning but also other specialised areas such as collaboration in STEM.

Immediate Outcome (IO) 2 – Learning community and education quality: Improvements in the school ecosystem and education quality in the classroom through capacity building, internationalisation, peer exchanges and sharing of effective practice based on mutual learning and global expertise.

International exchange and collaboration can support professional development, preparing teachers for global and local challenges (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013). Studies have also shown that international activities support capacity development among school leadership (Sahlin & Styf, 2021). Collaboration among teachers has been shown to have a positive effect on teaching practice (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023). This also applies to cross-country collaboration (Neal, Mullins, Reynolds, & Angles, 2013). Collaboration with peers at global level can lead to increased self-confidence, more openness, and stronger intercultural sensitivity among education professionals. Exposure to other cultures and contexts can encourage teachers and other education stakeholders to critically examine their own culture, including its inclusivity and understanding of pupils with diverse backgrounds (Phillion and Malewski, 2011); (Leutwyler, 2014).

At the school level, this type of awareness can impact learning approaches, classroom practice, assessment and expectations among the school community (ibid.). Networks of peer professionals can support ongoing capacity building and knowledge exchange among educators (European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2023), promoting debate and application of effective practice in the classroom. Here, it has been argued that an education fit for today's challenges should integrate exposure to international experiences for teachers and integrate global education in the curriculum (Devlin-Foltz, 2010).

Immediate Outcome (IO) 3 – School system and policy reform: Increased dialogue and collaboration between policymakers and partner governments to support improvements in education policy.

At the policymaker level, cultural relations through schools aim to strengthen education partnerships between countries, promoting joint effort and priority setting, and ultimately supporting the internationalisation of education systems. In facilitating collaboration among policymakers, cultural relations aim to jointly identify solutions to global education challenges, mutually reinforce education systems and outcomes and learn from international effective practice, to support progress in education. Closer collaboration among education stakeholders is key to address the global learning crisis (UNESCO; World Bank; & United Nations Children's Fund, 2021), enhancing the effectiveness of education policy to tackle complexity (McGinn, 2004). Importantly, collaboration requires 'a two-directional relationship' that both (or all) participants expect to benefit from. Only 'mutual reliance' can lead to a shift from 'development assistance' to equal partnerships (ibid.).

1.2 Cultural institutions' approaches to fostering cultural relations (including through schools)

1.2.1 Landscape mapping of cultural organisations

The international education landscape is characterised by a variety of cultural organisations that conduct education activities at the international, bilateral, and multinational level as part of their organisational mission. The vast majority of these activities focus on language learning and higher education.

This section provides a high-level overview of cultural organisations' application of cultural relations, including through schools. It also provides insights from interviews with representatives of four European cultural organisations, namely:

- France: Institut Français and Alliance Française.
- Germany: Goethe-Institut.
- Spain: Instituto Cervantes.

Documentation from these organisations was also included in our desk review, alongside the **Confucius Institute** (China).

Table 1 below provides an overview of the activities and programmes of cultural organisations sampled as part of this study. This includes their work applying a cultural relations approach to education activities. The table summarises strategic documents and publicly available information on organisations' work and mission. This information is complemented by primary data collection with representatives from four of these organisations. Both are discussed in the sub-sections below.

Table 1: Landscape mapping of cultural institutions

Cultural Institution	Founded	Soft Power Index[13]	Presence (no. of countries)	Centres	Administrative Status	Mission	Language Programming	Cultural Programming	Education Programming
British Council **UK**	1934	2	100	177	Executive non-departmental public body, registered charity and public corporation.	Support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. Specific aims are: i) promote cultural relationships between the people of the United Kingdom and other countries; ii) develop a wider knowledge of the English language; and iii) encourage educational co-operation between the United Kingdom and other countries, support the advancement of United Kingdom education and education standards overseas, and otherwise promote education.'	Growing the UK's reputation as a leader and trusted partner in English teaching, learning and testing. Strong focus on exams and UK qualifications.	Broad areas of collaboration in Arts, including Culture and Development, through which they argue for the value of arts, culture, creativity and heritage for long-term and sustainable development.	Supporting opportunities in schools, higher education and science, skills and employability, non-formal education, among others. Schools programming includes but is not limited to English language learning. Other notable areas include coding and 'building knowledge and skills for an inter-connected world'.
Institut Français **France**	1907	1	39	98[14]	Part of the French state infrastructure, it operates under the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is under the umbrella of the Ministry of Culture. It plays a crucial role in France's cultural diplomacy activities.	Promotion of the French language and culture abroad, at the crossroads between artistic sectors, intellectual exchange, cultural and social innovation, and language cooperation.	Promotes French language and culture, with a focus on promotion of literature, music, and the arts. Supports French teaching through several initiatives, including EdTech pilots,[15] online teacher training and training for French language interpreters,[16] to name a few examples.	Promotes circulation of art and artists and supports cultural diversity in France and abroad. Ultimately aims to reinforce the attractiveness of France, promote mobility of talent and encourage connections between French culture and other countries. Its programmes support collaboration in art, music, design, theatre, among other areas.	Work in education focuses on language learning resources for teachers and students, as well as cultural activities for students on French and francophone culture.

13 Country rankings according to the 2019 Soft Power report. Available from: https://softpower30.com/
14 https://www.institutfrancais.com/en
15 https://www.institutfrancais.com/fr/offre/fabrique-numerique-du-plurilinguisme
16 https://www.institutfrancais.com/fr/offre/la-fabrique-des-traducteurs

Cultural Institution	Founded	Soft Power Index[13]	Presence (no. of countries)	Centres	Administrative Status	Mission	Language Programming	Cultural Programming	Education Programming
Alliance Française **France**	1883	1	135	834	Network of non-profit, local associations.	Developing teaching and use of the French language; increase awareness of French and francophone cultures; promoting diversity and dialogue between cultures.	French language teaching, training and certification.	AF cultural institutes promote bilateral cultural exchange and organise events, exhibitions and other initiatives promoting Francophone culture, through activities tailored to the different regions it is present in.	Education activities focus on language learning, as well as promoting and supporting higher education opportunities in France, for example through Campus France.[17]
Goethe-Institut **Germany**	1951	3	98[18]	151	Main cultural institution of the Federal Republic of Germany, operating under a general agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	Facilitating international cultural exchange, promoting access to the German language and supporting the unimpeded development of culture and science. Its six focus areas are: i) dialogue and creativity; ii) mobility and immigration; iii) global learning; iv) sustainability; v) with Europe for Europe; vi) innovative organisation.	Promote international dialogue in several cultural areas, including visual Arts; film, television and radio; dance and theatre; and music, among others. Overall, support internationalisation of the cultural sector, offer training programmes and creative professionals and create regional and international platforms for networking.	Promoting collaboration in the arts, for instance through the Franco-German Cultural Fund and the International Co-Production Fund, to name some examples. Increasing focus on digitisation of culture and virtual international exchange.	Supports training of cultural professionals and higher education in cultural fields. Schools work is exemplified by PASCH, launched in 2008 by the German Foreign Office, to promote the interest of young people in Germany and the German language.
Instituto Cervantes	1991	13	45	88[19]	Operates under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and Spanish Cooperation.	Contribute to the teaching, study and use of the Spanish language and contribute to the dissemination of Hispanic culture abroad.	Strong focus on Spanish language teaching and learning, including exams and certifications of Spanish proficiency.	Support cultural exchange between Spanish and pan-Hispanic culture with the rest of the world. This includes events in the Cervantes Centres and network of libraries, as well as festivals, fairs, museum activities and publications.	No specific education activities outside of language learning.

17 https://afcaraibe.org/study-abroad/
18 In 2023, it was decided to close down 9 institutes globally (Deutschlandfunk Kultur, n.d.).
19 https://sidney.cervantes.es/en/about_us_spanish.htm#:~:text=The%20headquarters%20of%20the%20institution,countries%20in%20the%205%20Continents

Cultural Institution	Founded	Soft Power Index[13]	Presence (no. of countries)	Centres	Administrative Status	Mission	Language Programming	Cultural Programming	Education Programming
Confucius Institute **China**	2004	27	146	525[20]	Non-profit educational institutions jointly established by Chinese and overseas partner institutions based on principles of mutual respect, friendly consultation, equality, and mutual benefit.	The Confucius Institute aims to promote the spread of the Chinese language, deepen people's understanding of the Chinese language and culture worldwide, push forward educational cooperation and cultural exchange between China and the rest of the world, and enhance understanding between different groups of people across the world.[21]	Strong focus on Chinese language teaching and research, capacity building of Chinese language teachers, providing certification in regard to Chinese language and culture.	Language and cultural exchange programmes between China and other countries.	Strong focus on language learning.

20 https://www.heritage.org/homeland-security/commentary/confucius-institutes-chinas-trojan-horse
21 https://www.ci.cn/en/gywm/sl

1.2.2 Understanding diverging operating models and conceptualisations of cultural activities

The landscape mapping above highlights that the terminology of cultural relations is not employed by cultural organisations across the board. Despite this, some activities implemented by these organisations align with our definition, in their fostering of continued interaction and connectivity through cultural activities of different types.

Our review found that only the Goethe-Institut and the British Council conceptually linked their work, including on cultural exchanges and education, to global challenges. Conversely, the language employed by Institut Français, Alliance Française, Confucius Institute and Instituto Cervantes closely aligns with cultural diplomacy and soft power terminology. This showcases their strong linkages with government institutions.

The terminology and language employed by organisations depends largely on their institutional arrangements. Cultural organisations can be classified as operating according to four models (British Council & International Cultural Relations, 2021; British Council, 2022):

- **Public diplomacy:** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is the main body which delivers soft power and cultural relations activities through Embassies and Missions. This does not apply to any organisations in our sample, but is the case, for instance, for the USA's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.
- **Cultural diplomacy:** the MFA carries out national promotion through culture. It is most closely related to concepts of soft and cultural power, and reputational security.[22] Activities are organised by the MFA and connected bodies under its supervision. France's Institut Français and Spain's Instituto Cervantes fit under this category.
- **Cultural relations:** focus on the development of long-term relationships to increase trust and mutual understanding. The MFA plays a role, but the activities are delivered through 'specialist arm's length bodies'. Organisations more aligned to the cultural relations model are the UK's British Council and Germany's Goethe-Institut. This model places an emphasis on notions of mutual trust and long-term partnerships for the achievement of global goals, as explained in Section 1.1.
- **Chinese model:** China has a unique set-up, represented by the Confucius Institute, which is based within universities in host countries and is represented by the Chinese International Education Foundation (CIEF), a formally independent body from the Chinese government. This model combines concepts of hard and soft power, as a way to achieve a country's goals through the integration of strategy, resource and foreign policy, a concept known as 'smart power' (Armitage and Nye, 2007).

22 Reputational security is defined by Nick Cull as: 'if and when a country is well-thought of and seen as relevant by international audiences, it fares better in moments of crisis than states which are unknown. Reputational Security is a place on the high ground of the global imagination; it means that when a challenge comes – whether from a neighbour contesting sovereignty, internal secession, or rising sea levels – the world cares.' Source: Cull, N.J. (2021), From soft power to reputational security: rethinking public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy for a dangerous age. Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 18, 18–21. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41254-021-00236-0

Despite this distinction, it's important to note that cultural relations do, in fact, contribute to a country's soft power. Recent evidence points to the role of cultural relations in supporting perceptions of the UK around the globe. According to the Soft Power 30 index report in 2018, 'the British Council in particular has been instrumental in spreading British influence and cultivating soft power, through cultural and educational engagement' (McClory, 2018).

While cultural organisations explicitly define themselves as embracing one operating model over the other, it is important to note that within their broad programming there are several initiatives that can provide good examples of cultural relations, on the base of the definition employed throughout this paper.

Within our sample, the British Council and the Goethe-Institut are the only two organisations that make explicit references to cultural relations according to our definition (see Box 2), and explicit reference to contributing to global goals. Both organisations are semi-autonomous from government institutions, although they tap into government funding, particularly from respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Importantly, when the Goethe-Institut was founded, the British Council was taken as a model to follow, which partly explains this similarity.

1.2.3 Cultural relations through schools among sampled organisations

Among the institutions included in our sample, the British Council emerges as having the most long-standing and clearest strategic focus on cultural relations through schools, as per our definition (see Section 1.2.2). Overall, while the two institutions have distinct areas of interest and programming, the British Council and Goethe-Institut have strong similarities in their approach, which this paper will further explore. All other organisations in the sample, in fact, did not showcase a clear organisational focus on promoting mutual exchanges at primary and secondary level. Rather, their work in education was largely conceptualised as focusing on language learning through support to teachers and learners, and collaborations at higher education level. The mutuality element of education work was also not as prominent as in the case of the British Council and the Goethe-Institut.

In particular, the Instituto Cervantes, the Institut Français and the Alliance Française focus heavily on promoting language learning and uptake, seeing its value and applicability to people's lives, as highlighted in both organisational strategies and through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Cultural activities, including in schools,[23] are described as strategies to increase people's interest in French or Spanish culture, including among students and young people. There was no explicit reference to addressing global goals, including global education goals, in their programming.

23 https://www.institut-francais.org.uk/education-page/school-activities/#/

Box 3: Working internationally with schools: the Goethe-Institut's PASCH programme

The Goethe-Institut, which can be considered the 'closest' to the British Council in terms of organisational set-up and mission, has a flagship education programme, the PASCH initiative. This is Goethe-Institut's main cultural relations programme with schools by a group of partner organisations in Germany: the Federal Foreign Office, the Central Agency for Schools Abroad, the Goethe-Institut, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Educational Exchange Service (PAD).

Launched in 2008 by the then-Foreign Minister, PASCH is considered a 'beacon project that implements key objectives of cultural relations and education policy'[1] (Goethe-Institut, 2024). The initiative is a network of schools around the globe that support the teaching of German. PASCH partners provide advice to headteachers, ministries, and schools on developing German teaching. School partnerships between international and German PASCH schools are facilitated through the partnerschulnetz.de website. Activities include:

- Teacher training at the regional and supra-regional level, including projects involving teachers with pupils to facilitate cultural exchange.
- Alumni activities to maintain ties among PASCH students and support their academic careers, also by supporting opportunities to study in Germany.
- Policy development among PASCH partners (the Federal Foreign Office, the Central Agency for Schools Abroad, the Goethe-Institut, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Educational Exchange Service (PAD).

1 https://www.pasch-net.de/en/pasch-initiative/ueber-die-initiative.html

Our landscape mapping points to the British Council's unique added value in this landscape in two ways. First, the British Council has invested more time and resources than other organisations in strengthening the evidence base and theoretical foundations of cultural relations, with extensive research on the topic. In this sense, the British Council has put significant effort in acting as a thought leader on cultural relations, and a pioneer for working in primary and secondary education through a cultural relations approach. S**econd, the long-standing engagement in schools programming through mutual partnerships to support education outcomes beyond language learning** is a unique added value of its approach. The British Council's approach and case study examples are explored in Sections 2 and 3.

2 The British Council's cultural relations work in schools

The British Council has invested particular energy, extensive time and resources in cultural relations programming in schools on the basis of the added value brought by this approach to educational activities. As such, this study analyses the British Council as a case study to assess the added value of its cultural relations approach to school programming, across the different countries in which it operates. The British Council sees the added value of working with schools through a cultural relations approach as lying in its mutuality, international perspective and potential for system change and policy reform. The work carried out by the British Council also sits in strategic alignment with the UK government's global goals. This is evidenced at country level through the British Council's work in Brazil, India, Kenya, Lebanon and, to an extent, in Albania, France and Spain.

2.1 British Council's work in schools: an overview[24]

The British Council Schools team has a unique track record of working with schools and young people in both the UK and globally to improve their international outlook and help deliver quality education. Programmes like Connecting Classrooms (CC) and Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL) have reached more than 40 countries, including the UK, from 2000 to 2021 through policy dialogue, continuous professional development programmes, school partnerships and exchanges, research, and the International Schools Award (ISA) accreditation scheme.

This approach contributes to international development aims in unique ways. Part of its added value compared to traditional international development education work lies in continuity. Many of the projects underlying the British Council's current Global Schools programme, Schools Connect, predate it by years or decades, thanks to the long-term ties established by country offices. Moreover, the British Council's strategic decision to more explicitly promote values of mutuality, peace and understanding, in all cycles of education in both UK and partner countries, resonates with the UK government's recognition of 'development' as being based on partnerships and addressing global challenges, rather than unidirectional development assistance (FCDO, 2023).

In 2021, the British Council decided to reframe all its new and existing schools' programmes and educational offerings within the organisation's cultural relations approach (including programmes previously run by the Schools team but not traditionally included within either CC or CCGL, such as the Modern Foreign Languages). As a result, the new British Council's Global Schools Programme, Schools Connect, which runs from 2022 to 2025, groups new and existing British Council school programmes and educational offering[25] under four strands (Research and Impact, Internationalisation of Schools, Policy Engagement and Advocacy, Enhanced Education and Capacity Development) and six thematic workstreams (International Opportunities for Schools, Policy Engagement, Inclusive Schools, Skills for Schools, Modern Foreign Languages, Climate Change and Sustainability Education). Each workstream encompasses types of activities from one or more strands.

24 The descriptions of workstreams and strands presented in this chapter take stock of previous conversations on the School Connect programme held with BC workstream leads and regional leads, and deliverables and background documentation shared for the completion of a previous assignment on 'Design and implementation of a MEL system for the Schools Connect Programme': namely, the Schools Connect Theory of Change, and country plans and workstream plans for the years 2022/23 and 2023/2024. The views expressed about how each workstream fits into the Cultural Relations approach represent the understanding of the author.

25 For the purposes of this study, as per the ToR of this assignment, we consider 'schools programming' to be all British Council programmes that now fall under the 'Schools Connect' Global Programme plus the Mandarin Excellence Programme. ELT programmes, as not implemented in schools, fall out of the scope of this research.

2.1.1 Four outcome strands

According to the Programme Theory of Change, outcomes and activities of Schools Connect are structured as follows:

1. Research and Insight

The Outcome of this strand is to 'position the British Council as a thought leader on the Schools Connect thematic areas through evidence-based research informing system and school level policies.' Activities under this strand typically include global research reports and dissemination, local research activities in country, media engagement and advocacy.

2. Internationalisation of Schools

The Outcome of this strand is 'supporting systems, institutions and individuals to benefit from internationalisation, including through Partnerships, ISA, and other international connection activities.' Activities under this strand typically include partnership, accreditation schemes, policy engagement, global events.

3. Policy Engagement and advocacy

The Outcome of this strand is 'Strengthening systems and institutions through policy dialogue, advocacy, technical assistance and engagement.' Activities under this strand typically include Media engagement, international events, global and country policy engagement, guided partnerships, education exchange webinars, technical assistance to Ministries of Education (MoEs).

4. Enhanced Education and Capacity Development

The Outcome of this strand is 'Promoting improvement of teaching and learning practices in UK and internationally and supporting students to become globally aware and competent.' Activities under this strand typically include continuous professional development for teachers and school leaders (courses, MOOCs), provision of online training resources (manuals, toolkits, policy guidelines), and study visits.

2.1.2 Six workstreams

The thematic areas of the programme are organised under six workstreams:

1. International Opportunities for Schools

The International Opportunities for Schools workstream activities aim to support schools and teachers to bring a wider perspective to their classroom on a variety of global topics and develop new skills. Partnerships among similar schools from the UK and all regions of the world, accreditation programmes for internationalisation of schools – namely, the International School Awards (ISA) – and face to face (F2F) exchange programmes are representative of the cultural relations approach that the British Council brings into school programming. They enable schools to internationalise their curricula, expose UK and partner countries' school systems to peer learning and exchange, and provide students with opportunities to become more aware and competent about global challenges and interdependencies. School partnerships are designed in consultation with education stakeholders to ensure equitable and mutually beneficial processes and outcomes. Cultural relations approaches consider local contexts and needs and identify mutual benefits.

2. Policy Engagement

Designed to expose the UK education system to effective practices and innovations from partner countries, and support education system development in partner countries by sharing UK experience and expertise, the activities of this workstream (UK Policy exchanges, departmental visits and study visits, knowledge exchanges, and global conferences) foster policy change, intercultural dialogue, and internationalisation of school curricula.

3. Inclusive Schools

The 'Inclusive Schools' workstream supports policymakers and school leaders to create more inclusive schooling for marginalised children, and particularly girls and pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). Activities work with policymakers through dialogue, advocacy and policy development with a focus on instructional leadership; and school leaders and teachers by providing resources and CPD on inclusive schools and teaching practices.

4. Skills for Schools

The Skills for School workstream activities – consisting of online, self-access courses on core skills for teachers and leaders; massive open online courses (MOOC) on teaching and assessing core skills; classroom based coding and critical thinking programmes – are designed to provide continuous professional development and technical support to policymakers, school leaders and teachers. This ultimately aim to include more teaching and learning of Core Skills and 21st Century Skills in their curricula.

5. Modern Foreign Languages

The overall aim of the offer is to advocate for the learning of languages and the knowledge and valorisation of native languages other than English in UK schools. The main product of this workstream is the Language Trends series, an annual survey of primary and secondary schools in England, designed to gather information on language teaching and learning in the UK. Its aims are: i) to assess the impact of policy measures in relation to languages; and ii) to analyse strengths and weaknesses based both on quantitative evidence and on views expressed by teachers (Collen, 2023). The Language Trends series seeks to provide a springboard for all education sector actors to consider aspects of language learning more deeply. This research series, dating back 20 years in England, represents an important source of information for policymaking in the UK. Through this research series, the British Council shapes the conversation of education stakeholders in UK around the importance of integrating MFL in the curriculum, providing updated information on the state of teaching and learning languages other than English in the UK and sharing evidence on the positive impact on students. The issues raised by Language Trends annual reports also inform the work of the National Consortium for Language Education (NCLE), of which the British Council is a member.

6. Climate Change and Sustainability Education (CCSE)

The aims of the Schools Connect Climate Change and Sustainability workstream are: to facilitate evidence-based discussions on CCSE and raise awareness of the need for quality CCSE in schools amongst policy makers, educators and sector experts, through global conferences, webinars, policy engagement activities; to support education systems and educators to embed quality CCSE learning within the curriculum and within the classroom through CDP activities and direct engagement with students; and to share UK expertise on CCSE with policy makers and educators around the world.

2.2 Cultural relations through schools programming

The cultural relations approach is a key enabler of the whole school programming, as it is stated clearly by the Schools Connect Impact Statement:

Through a cultural relations approach, (to) improve basic education in the UK and overseas by a) supporting UK governments to learn from the most successful school systems around the world and for UK schools to internationalise their curricula; and b) using UK expertise to support school system reform and development around the world.

This statement matches our definition of working internationally with schools through a cultural relations approach, since it underpins the **mutual dimension of learning** and peer exchange and promotes **school system transformation and internationalisation**.

The intrinsic value of a cultural relations approach in a schools' context is evident in the connections nurtured through facilitated exchanges and co-constructed school partnership work. Numerous participant quotes points to their increased knowledge and understanding of other cultures and contexts, and the development of skills for living and working in a global society (British Council, 2022).

Within Schools Connect, the International Opportunities for Schools and Climate Change and Sustainability Education workstreams encompass exchanges and school partnerships activities to build and maintain connections among schools on a variety of relevant, SDGs-related topics. (Immediate Outcome 2).

One of the fields where the value of the British Council's cultural relations through schools' approach is more evident is the Modern Foreign Language (MFL) workstream, whose activities advocate for the teaching and learning of languages in UK schools (also by integrating international learning opportunities within the curriculum) and for the knowledge and use of mother tongues other than the language of instruction in schools. Activities typically include the design of resources for schools to raise awareness of languages other than English that are spoken in UK – such as the Celebrate Speaking Festival[26] – and to promote knowledge of other cultures' traditions – for example, the Chinese New Year Resource Pack.

Evidence shows that international learning opportunities through the learning of modern foreign languages or the engagement with students from schools in different countries has far-reaching benefits for pupils in the UK. These include cultural and global competence, (Mateo-Toledo & Nuñez, 2022), improved performance across various subject areas compared to their peers who do not study a foreign language (The British Academy, 2019), and improved concentration and communication skills.

26 https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/languages/celebrate-speaking

The experience and reputation as thought leader in this area gained through the MFL programme has helped the British Council gain government support for another flagship programme, the Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP), funded by the Department for Education (DfE).

The Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP), a unique language programme in the UK, helps students learn Mandarin through classroom teaching and immersive cultural experiences such as exchange programmes to China. According to the most recent programme evaluation, MEP students outperformed students not enrolled in the programme, not only in language tests but also across other subject areas. The programme also increased their confidence in communicating their opinions and their motivation to participate in classroom learning. MEP teachers also highlighted the achievement of wider cultural competencies such as global awareness, collaboration and empathy among MEP students, which are not captured in exam results but are visible in their daily activities (UK Department of Education, 2021–2022).

These foundational experiences in languages and international exchanges are essential to build the skills required to pursue work and study opportunities in a global market. With the rise of China as an economic and cultural power, Mandarin is an important language for the UK not only from a cultural perspective but also to create and sustain strategic economic and cultural ties with China. In the British Council's Language Trends 2023 report (Collen I. , 2023), evidence suggested that Mandarin is the most popular language taught in England after French, German and Spanish (sometimes referred to as 'the big three').

In spite of this, it is worth noting that demand for learning of foreign languages has been falling in the UK over recent years (The Guardian, 2023). Data suggests that fewer students are taking GSCE language courses, due partly to the rise of STEM subjects and perceived difficulty of language examinations. The UK has been taking measures to support the DfE's English baccalaureate (EBacc) ambition for 90 per cent of year 10 students in state schools to study foreign languages by 2025, but this figure was only at 38.7 per cent for the academic year 2021/22 (ibid.).

Beyond immersing students in learning modern foreign languages, research suggests that international student exchanges in partner countries also enhance student's intercultural competencies (Ro'ziqulovna & Jamshid qizi, 2024). Engaging with students in different countries, immersing into their lived experiences and jointly participating in their daily activities provides a diverse perspective for students from abroad to understand and respect other cultures. A pilot programme assessing the benefits of international school exchanges among 11–19-year-old UK students found a positive effect on students' confidence, particularly in facing new challenges and speaking in public, which are important 21st century skills. The exchanges promoted a global outlook among students, increasing awareness of cultural differences and commonalities and fostering appreciation for educational opportunities (Thornton, et al., 2021).

The Cultural Relations approach of the British Council in schools, as evidenced in research, interviews, and organisational documents, is characterised by trust and respect, situated in processes of mutual learning and capacity-building, networking, and partnership (Kenneth & Knight, 2018). The instrumental value of policy engagement activities with a cultural relations approach lies in the long-term relationships built through partnerships at policy level. These uniquely position the British Council in supporting system reforms, or even directly contributing to them by taking part in curriculum design and/or the delivery of national teacher training programmes (British Council, 2022). This is best exemplified by the Policy Engagement workstream, whose activities contribute to position the British Council as a thought leader on education, pursuing the objectives of building trust and reputation for the institution (Immediate Outcome 2).

UK Policy exchanges, departmental visits and study visits encompass a strong element of mutuality, fostering policy change in both the UK and partner countries. They support by peer learning and exchange of expertise and effective practices on topics of interest for policymakers, school leaders and teachers. Knowledge exchanges (Education Exchange Webinars, Singapore Building Educational Bridges) and global conferences facilitate policy dialogue by exposing policymakers, teachers, school leaders and practitioners from UK and partner countries to expert inputs on the latest key educational topics and innovations. This provides a sense of belonging to an international community and fosters mutual trust and understanding, as well as improving their intercultural competencies and international outlook.

The focus on mutual benefits for policymakers, school leaders, teachers and pupils make this approach unique in the international education landscape and Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) funds for education.

Mutuality needs to be considered as a strategic trait rather than under a transactional perspective. Although not always evident at individual programme level, mutuality can appear at different levels of the education system, for instance through technical partnerships with the Ministries of Education and other bodies (British Council, 2022).

The mutuality of the cultural relations approach is evident, at a strategic level, in the Skills for Schools workstream activities. Helping countries to shape education systems with a global, international outlook can help create networks of educated and skilled individuals who may later become valuable partners in various fields, including business, academia, and diplomacy, and be better equipped to face global challenges and crisis in a spirit of mutual understanding. The British Council's cultural relations approach to policy engagement and its experience in delivering increasingly complex and large-scale education programmes globally, particularly in teachers' CPD, place it in a strong position to add value to donor priority agendas for education interventions.

That said, beyond the instrumental value-add of cultural relations, a stronger case needs to be made to establish the link between the core skills offering and the implicit intrinsic value of these activities, including how they reinforce cultural relations in the long run.

Another key feature of the cultural relations approach in working with schools is impacting on national education policies by addressing *globally relevant, SDG-aligned educational themes* such as inclusive education, gender equality, STEM, and Climate Change and Sustainability education. Research activities carried on within the thematic workstream of Inclusive Education, for instance, align both with national priorities in participating countries, as well as global recommendations from the UN and other intergovernmental agencies. A recent research paper commissioned by the British Council (Oyinloye, Mkwananzi, & Mukwambo, 2023) analysed Schools Connect programming in five sub-Saharan countries. The study identified barriers and opportunities to achieve gender transformative education in low-income contexts, with the purpose of informing the British Council policy for girls' education. This kind of evidence-based research contributes to achieving the SDGs (namely, SDG 4 and 5) and shaping policies at the national level by providing governments with an understanding of the intrinsic, pedagogic, systemic, and societal barriers that girls face in accessing equitable and inclusive quality education. **Finally, the added value of working in schools through a cultural relations approach lies in its aim for systemic change in the education sector in both UK and partner countries.** Acting as a facilitator and catalyst of stakeholders in education, the British Council can exercise influence at all levels of educational reforms[27]:

- **At global policy level, the British Council frames its interventions within the recommendations and directions of UN agencies.**
- **At the public sphere level, the British Council plays as a thought leader in the '*fluid space of media, local public meetings and lectures in which public reasoning is aired*'** (Unterhalter & North, 2018), by promoting conferences, round tables, and public events, and

27 For the concept of 'middle space' of policy enactments see (Unterhalter & North, 2018).

producing research that shapes the debate around pressing education sector issues, as it is the case of the Language Trends research series.

- **At national policymaking level, the British Council is positioned uniquely to help countries (including the UK) implement policy reforms with an international outlook, acting as a mediator between global priorities, the public debate and the decision-making space that informs local policies.** In that sense, the British Council does more than aligning to national policies and priorities by playing an active part in needs assessment and policymaking. The long-lasting, trust-based relationships with MoEs globally (both in the UK and partner countries) give the British Council an accurate understanding not only of the policy landscape, but also of the complex functioning of education institutions involved in policymaking. The impact of the British Council on national education policies is backed up by evidence from past and current school programming. The evaluation of CCGL in Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) (Ipsos & Learn More, 2022) found a greater focus on inclusive practices, global citizenship and core skills in Special Education manuals and guidelines, introduced by UNRWA and the MoE. This was found to be partly attributable to awareness-raising interventions brought by CCGL-trained school leaders and teachers. Qualitative evidence consistently showed that training equipped teachers with better skills for engagement of students with Special Educational Needs and Disability – a topic of the greatest importance in the current OPT educational programming framework.
- **At the level of social and professional relations and groups taking part in the democratic iteration of global policies in local systems (Benhabib, 2011), the British Council provides teachers and school leaders with innovative contents and methodologies for teaching and learning 21st century skills, SDGs, and Climate Change and Sustainability topics. It also creates spaces for education professionals to convey, share experiences, recognise and scale innovations coming from their own practices in schools** (see Case Studies – India in Section 3). Activities aimed at enhancing competences and building capacities are mainly grouped under the Skills for School workstream (CPD, MOOCs, etc.), but also relate to topics such as climate change, girls' education, and inclusion.
- **At individual level, the British Council schools offering aims to expose children and students to learning experiences that are innovative, international in their outlook, and that enhance of a set of skills and global competences for 21st century's challenges.** The goal of schools programming and education system transformation at large is, in fact, to raise awareness and competence of global citizens towards future challenges, instilling a spirit of cooperation, trust and respect among peers. Far from being mere 'anecdotal' evidence, feedback shared directly by children and students is coherent with a systemic approach to education systems. However, the effect of exposure to internationalisation may be difficult to measure and lacks unanimous consensus (Auld & Morris, 2019) among those taking part in internationalisation experiences. Here, global policies are articulated, negotiated, and evaluated at all levels of the 'middle space' of policy enactment, culminating in the personal value that end users or participants place in their experience and how it connects with their personal values, connections and compassion (Unterhalter & North, 2018).

The **systemic scope of the cultural relations approach** to schools is evident in the Climate Change and Sustainability Education (CCSE) workstream.

In setting out the case for including CCSE in schools curriculum, the thought leadership document Global priorities for enhancing school-based climate change and sustainability education' (Rushton, Sharp, & Walshe, 2023), commissioned by the British Council, argues that context-sensitivity, a whole-school approach (involving all school actors and different disciplines), a focus on teachers' and school leaders' professional development, and the exchange of good practices are the key to quality CCSE. These are areas where the cultural relations approach applied by the British Council can showcase its added value.

Building on previous activities in schools worldwide[28] and responding to both global and local policy priorities[29], the workstream offer comprises of several activities targeting actors of the education system across all grades:

- **Policy engagement activities and global conferences** act at national policy level, raising awareness among education policymakers of the need to embed quality climate change and sustainability education in the curriculum (Immediate Outcome 3).
- **Education exchange webinars**, by creating a global conversation on climate and sustainability themes for educators, place the British Council as a though leader in the public sphere where the public discourse is aired and shaped (Immediate Outcome 2).
- **CCSE resources for schools and teacher CPD training** act on the level of social and professional relations and groups, by providing professionals with outward-looking, innovative contents and methodologies for teaching and learning (Immediate Outcome 2).
- **Guided International School Partnerships** and face-to-face student events act at the individual level, positively impacting the ultimate target of whole school programming: students and youth. Creating space for students to exchange ideas and discuss global topics impacting their future in a spirit of mutual cooperation, trust and respect bears an invaluable personal significance for the participants.[30]

A case study on India in Section 3 further analyses the dimension of adaptation to local context and cultural sensitivity of school programming as a key feature of cultural relations in schools.

28 Climate Change and Sustainability Education (CCSE) have been important themes within British Council Schools work for many years. In 2021, British Council Schools delivered a range of climate and sustainability focused activities with multiple partners as part of the wider British Council Climate Connection programme. The Schools Climate Connection project facilitated school partnerships, designed climate resources for teachers, hosted a Global Knowledge Exchange for education practitioners involving by its closing more than 6000 schools and 18000 teachers and schools.

29 The DfE's most recent Sustainability and Climate Change strategy (April 2022) sets out ambitious goals for UK schools, including targets on carbon emissions and eradicating single use plastics, all schools having a sustainability lead and a new Natural History GCSE. Its vision is for the United Kingdom's education sector to become the world leader in sustainability and climate change by 2030. The strategies to achieve this ambition are: i) increasing opportunities for climate education and access to nature; ii) driving opportunities to increase biodiversity and climate resilience; and iii) co-ordinating and leading a whole-setting approach to climate change and sustainability.

30 The testimonies of students participating in the COP28 simulation point to the personal significance of this experience (see https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/cop28-climate-negotiation-simulation-events). . https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/cop28-climate-negotiation-simulation-events

3 Case studies

The British Council's schools work varies significantly from country to country, reflecting its local presence and the adaptability of its programming. While supporting educational priorities within nations, the British Council also initiates learning and programme collaboration at the regional level. Interviewees from Brazil and Albania highlighted their partnerships with other countries within the Americas and Western Balkan regional clusters, respectively. In the words of a British Council staff in Brazil:

'It is important to point out that nothing is more valuable in the work of the British Council than the trust and collaboration we have established with the countless specialists we work with in the countries where we operate. Without them, no contribution or outcome would be possible.'[31]

For instance, Coding for Kids, a project between the British Council and the Ministry of Education in Colombia, has extended its impact to Brazil, with tailored adaptations to fit the local context and language. Mirroring the successful framework established in Colombia, the project not only offers valuable insights and lessons learned for Brazil, but also streamlines the adaptation process for countries facing similar educational challenges. This sub-section provides an overview of programming at the country level, linking projects to the outcomes identified in Section 1.2 on a cultural relations approach to schools programming.

3.1 Albania

3.1.1. Schools programming

Dating its presence in the country back to 1994, the British Council has established long-lasting and mutual cultural relations with the Albanian government and stakeholders in the fields of art, culture, and education. With a strong focus on capacity development of teachers and school leaders, the British Council launched the first accredited professional development programme for teachers, across grades 1–9, aimed at integrating global learning into Albanian classrooms.

The British Council's 21st Century Schools Programme in the Western Balkans was implemented in the six Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) for 36 months (October 2018 through September 2021), with the aim to enhance digital literacy and prepare students of age 10 to 15 years for the professions of the future. The programme's approach included development of core skills and competencies, such as critical thinking and problem solving, and digital skills with a focus on coding (Babović, Kijevčanin, Gallopeni, & Tomovska Misoska, 2021).

Managed previously through the Partnerships Team, the Skills for Schools – Coding stream of work is now part of the overarching Schools Connect offer from the British Council. In Albania, the programme supported capacity development among 18,000 trained teachers and 4000 school principals to implement new learning approaches and methods (British Council Albania, 2024), contributing to challenging traditional ways of learning and teaching, and exposing pupils to a critical teaching environment. Pupils' interest and abilities in coding have also improved (ibid.). The programme did not have a high impact on children with special needs and disabilities, but a study of hindering factors has been carried out to identify bottlenecks in implementation and areas for improvement (Babović, Kijevčanin, Gallopeni, & Tomovska Misoska, 2021).

3.1.2 Cultural relations outcomes

Support to the school system in Albania has been holistic, targeting policymakers, teachers and school leaders, and pupils. Innovations in teaching and learning have aligned with national education priorities and globally relevant education themes; and the programme was able to influence policymaking at national level.

However, there is little evidence of a mutual approach of peer learning and exchange of effective practices among the UK and Albanian education stakeholders and actors.

31 Interview with British Council staff in Brazil.

Table 2: Immediate Outcomes of the Cultural relations approach in schools in Albania

IO 1 – Individual level changes: Improved skills, attitudes and behaviours for individuals taking part in activities, be they pupils, teachers, and other school stakeholders, such as school leaders, or policymakers.	An independent evaluation report (Bartlett, Pagliarello, Monastiriotis, & Prica, 2022) found that the Programme has been highly effective for pupils, improving their skills and attitudes. The programme has contributed to challenging established ways of learning and teaching, exposing pupils to a critical teaching environment, and fostering their interest in providing their opinions. Pupils' interest in coding has also increased. The programme has been effective in supporting an increase in the application of critical thinking and problem solving (CTPS) teaching methods in classrooms, and teachers have improved their knowledge and teaching practice of CTPS and coding.
IO 2 – Learning community and education quality: Improvements in the school ecosystem and education quality in the classroom through capacity building, internationalisation, peer exchanges and sharing of effective practices based on mutual learning and global expertise.	Even though a partnership between the British Council and Micro:bit Foundation (British Council) made available relevant global expertise and capacity building to the country's school system, the programme – according to available evidence – did not include any element of mutuality or sharing of effective practices at regional or international level.
IO 3 – School system and policy reform: Increased dialogue and collaboration between policymakers and partner governments to support improvements in education policy.	The 21st Century Schools Programme was relevant and well aligned in the stated needs and priorities of the Albanian education sector of improving the digital competencies of both students and teachers and, more broadly, to foster digitalisation and digital literacy in the education system (OECD, 2024); (UNICEF & ITU, 2022). This demonstrates that the programme supported improvements in education policy, but there is no sufficient available evidence about collaboration among policymakers to assess whether the outcome has been completely achieved.

3.2 Brazil

3.2.1 Schools programming

In Brazil, the British Council is placing particular emphasis on gender equality and Women and Girls in STEM through a 'life cycle' approach. Several programmes targeting policymakers, school leaders and teachers, and pupils aim at inspiring young girls to take up and stay in STEM, support women working in STEM to network with their peers in their region and the UK, and run mentorship programmes and scholarships to support career progression (Bello & Estébanez, 2022).

The Women in Science Programme began in 2018 to strengthen links between women in science in Brazil and the UK at the individual and institutional levels, aiming to build capacity, promote the scientific agenda for women and strengthen national and international networks (Barata & Ludwig, 2023). Today, the British Council's global STEM Education programme aims to build connections between the UK and Brazil through research and training activities focused on citizen science, critical pedagogies, informal education spaces, and inclusion, aiming to identify and promote methodologies which can be replicated in schools in the two countries (Unbehaum, Gava, & Artes, 2023). Initiatives within the programme range from teachers and school leaders training and capacity building programmes.[32] to innovative platforms for peer learning, training and exchange[33] (British Council Brazil, n.d.), to evidence-based research on effective practices based on a process of listening to the experiences of school managers, teachers and students. These initiatives aim to provide participants with innovative and stimulating tools for teaching of STEM whilst ensuring

32 Instances of such programmes include Inspire Science and Girls in School, Women in Science.
33 Instances of such programmes include STEM Education Hub and Inspire Science.

equity and inclusion of under-represented groups, such as girls, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities (De Pietri & Ferreira Campos, 2020).

The Schools Connect programme in Brazil is coherent with this 'life cycle approach', focusing on inclusive STEM education, computational thinking, and coding skills. Building on the previous Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) clubs' experience and contextualising a learning offering inspired by Coding for Kids Colombia, the British Council is currently delivering an inclusive STEM learning project in public school systems in Brazil, starting from a pilot in one territory. The offer includes teacher training, policy dialogue with stakeholders and potential donors, and F2F delivery in the classrooms. The Coding for Kids training offered to teachers is focused on inclusion and engagement of girls in STEM subjects to ensure girls are more engaged in STEM education and will consider these types of careers in the future. The training is accompanied by guides on how to implement tools and methodology to teach STEM with a gender-inclusive focus.

3.2.2 Cultural relations outcomes

Brazil's 'life cycle approach' stands out as a unique element of British Council work in schools. Programmes are designed to ensure that participants develop their skills from primary school to higher education in a consistent, coherent manner. They provide an opportunity to deepen cultural exchanges with the UK through scholarships, mentoring programmes, and wider networking platforms. In general, British Council programming in schools in Brazil has achieved or is designed to achieve the outcomes of a cultural relations approach.

Table 3: Immediate Outcomes of the Cultural relations approach in schools in Brazil

IO 1 – Individual level changes: Improved skills, attitudes and behaviours for individuals taking part in activities, be they pupils, teachers, and other school stakeholders, such as school leaders, or policymakers.	There is alignment with both national needs and priorities of the Brazilian education sector (National Digital Education Policy, 2023) (OECD iLibrary, 2024), that highlight teacher training in technology and digital literacy, aiming to develop these new skills within students and providing them with further access to job opportunities (OECD iLibrary, 2023). There is also alignment with UK goals, as the focus on gender equality and girls' education in STEM, computational thinking and coding skills is aligned with FCDO priorities, as stated in the International Women and Girls Strategy (FCDO, March 2023).
IO 2 – Learning community and education quality: Improvements in the school ecosystem and education quality in the classroom through capacity building, internationalisation, peer exchanges and sharing of effective practices based on mutual learning and global expertise. **IO 3** – School system and policy reform: Increased dialogue and collaboration between policymakers and partner governments to support improvements in education policy.	The systemic approach to education programming is evident in the variety of initiatives that involve policymakers, school leaders, teachers, and students. The British Council's in-depth knowledge of the Brazil STEM teaching and learning landscape (Unbehaum, Gava, & Artes, 2023) has helped shape initiatives that are co-designed, based on evidence from both countries, and based on regional cooperation and understanding among partner countries, which ensures that both Immediate Outcomes 2 and 3 are achieved.

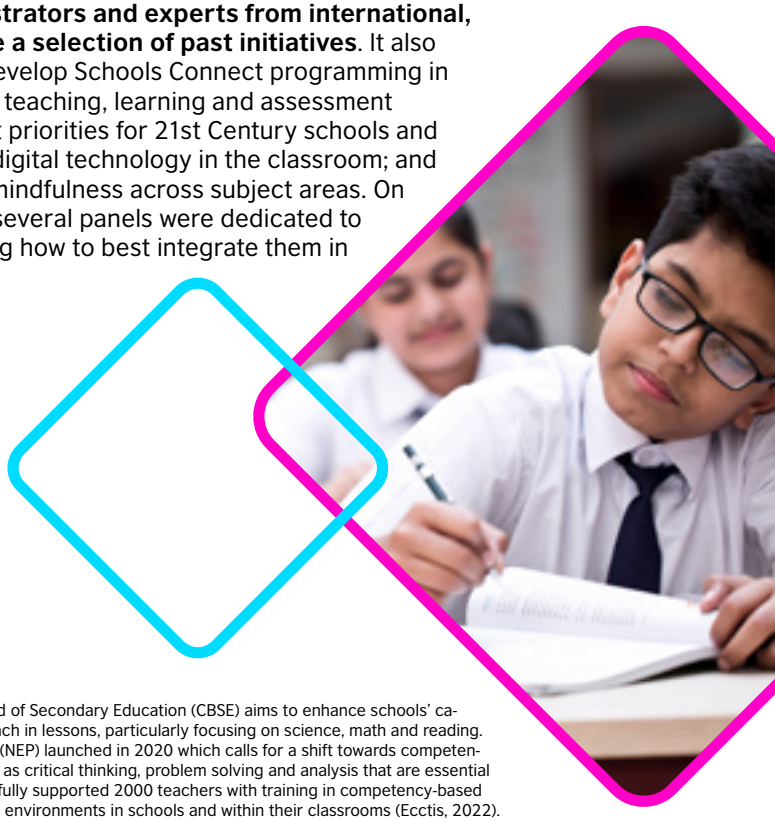
3.3 India

3.3.1 Schools programming

The British Council and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) have been working together to jointly create programmes and resources that support institutional and systemic development across schools in India. Over the years, the British Council has also created several knowledge and skill-based professional development programmes and resources for teachers and education professionals. Recently closed or ongoing projects in schools are Connecting Classroom Commonwealth Connection, the Premier League Primary Stars, and the Recognition of an International Dimension in Schools (RIDS) programme (former International School Award). The Competency-based Education Project[34], whose first iteration ran from 2019 to 2022, is currently being implemented within the Schools Connect programming in the country. The programme aims to improve student learning outcomes through improved assessment focusing on students' competencies; build system capacity through the development of resources and handbooks for trainers and mentors; and support the school environment in achieving competency-based education through capacity building for teachers and school leadership. **Moreover, the British Council and the CBSE recently signed an MoU for collaboration to improve quality of teaching and assessment in schools**, including through sharing knowledge-sharing between sector experts in both countries. The MoU aims to implement the guidelines established by the National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2023). These encourage an integrated curricular approach in schools, which will bring together essential subjects, skills and capacities within the curriculum. These include Environmental Education, Global Citizenship Education (GCE), and Climate Change and Sustainability Education (CCSE) (British Council & CBSE, 2023).

In November 2023, a School Connect research paper explored the global context of school-based CCSE and ways to enhance its teaching and learning in several countries, including India. The paper found that, building on the extensive programme of environment education already in place in India, two opportunities to further enhance climate change and sustainability education would be to strengthen holistic approaches to climate change education and teacher professional development (Rushton, Sharp, & Walshe, 2023).

In December 2023, the School Education Conference gathered British Council experts, Indian education policymakers, educators, school administrators and experts from international, UK and Indian education organisations to showcase a selection of past initiatives. It also encouraged dialogue and learning on how to further develop Schools Connect programming in country, in the areas of: policy implementation through teaching, learning and assessment methodologies; curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment priorities for 21st Century schools and school boards; enhancing computational thinking and digital technology in the classroom; and integrating environment education, sustainability and mindfulness across subject areas. On this last topic, in line with research recommendations, several panels were dedicated to showcasing experiences of CCSE in India and discussing how to best integrate them in school curricula (British Council & CBSE, 2023).



34 The Competency-based Education Project in partnership with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) aims to enhance schools' capacity to move from a content-based approach to a competency-based approach in lessons, particularly focusing on science, math and reading. The project aligns with the priorities of the country's National Education Policy (NEP) launched in 2020 which calls for a shift towards competency-based learning experiences for students to develop 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and analysis that are essential for future success (Government of India, 2020). So far, the project has successfully supported 2000 teachers with training in competency-based pedagogy, and 400 of them in inclusive pedagogies to foster inclusive learning environments in schools and within their classrooms (Ecctis, 2022). Interviews with British Council staff from India highlighted the importance of such a partnership to forge mutual relationships at the policy level, particularly their involvement in the implementation of the education policy across the country.

3.3.2 Cultural relations outcomes

According to interviews with British Council India staff and other stakeholders, as well as the 2023 British Council India report, past British Council programming in schools in India has achieved the outcomes of a cultural relations approach. Current programming, as laid out and presented in the Schools Education Conference held in New Delhi in 2023, is also clearly framed within this approach. The Conference is an example of the British Council's cultural relations approach that informs and help build policies from the global to the individual level. Building on existing relations of trust and respect and drawing on previous research on school ecosystems and a deep knowledge and understanding of the education context in the country,[35] the British Council brought together groups of professionals and experts to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and shaping of policies, programming, and teaching and learning methodologies. This was done in a spirit of mutuality and peer learning, ensuring that local voices, perspectives and views on several topics (including climate change and sustainability) were heard and embedded into Schools Connect programming.

35 The British Council is a credible thought leader on India's education landscape, to the point that it partnered the UNESCO 'State Education Report for India 2023 – Seeds of Change' (Sarabhai & Purohit, 2023), which advocates for concerted efforts to address issues of climate change.

Table 4: Immediate Outcomes of the Cultural relations approach in schools in India

IO 1 – Individual level changes: Improved skills, attitudes and behaviours for individuals taking part in activities, be they pupils, teachers, and other school stakeholders, such as school leaders, or policymakers.	An evaluation commissioned by British Council India on the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) – Competency Based Education (CBE) project in 2022 found that most outcomes for teacher training were achieved to a good quality standard, with an increase in teacher capacity for CBE teaching and knowledge of CBE pedagogy. Positive outcomes were assessed also for CBSE leaders, school leaders and key stakeholders, who increased their knowledge of CBE and capacity to support the transition to a CBE system in schools (Ecctis, 2022). According to British Council India,, 'the project made a tangible difference in the lives of individuals, shaping their perspectives, actions, and global citizenship. Participants developed a greater sense of empathy towards others and exhibited a transformed outlook'. [36] Current programming is also based on improving skills of teachers and learners in the areas that were developed during the School Education Conference (British Council & CBSE, 2023).
IO 2 – Learning community and education quality: Improvements in the school ecosystem and education quality in the classroom through capacity building, internationalisation, peer exchanges and sharing of effective practices based on mutual learning and global expertise.	The CBSE – CBE project was found impactful at the system level in that CBSE leaders had a clear understanding of the process for improvement of education standards in line with CBE principles and support schools in that process. Current programming shows great emphasis on the peer exchanges and mutual learning component.
IO 3 – School system and policy reform: Increased dialogue and collaboration between policymakers and partner governments to support improvements in education policy.	Mutuality and knowledge of the context have shaped the cultural relations approach of the British Council, although with some regional differences, as suggested by evidence on programming up to 2022 (British Council, 2022): 'evaluation of the British Council's teacher training programme in Maharashtra State highlighted the development of partnerships between the state government and other organisations to collaborate in projects supporting teacher training and CPD in the state. Evaluation of the programme provides evidence of a highly developed set of relationships and finely tuned understanding of the local context'. In some cases, evidence has suggested that Connecting Classrooms could have benefitted from a stronger consideration of local priorities when working with policymakers and in delivery (ibid). Current British Council programming is more focused on consideration of local priorities and involvement of policymakers in designing interventions, as showcased by the 2023 Conference's participatory approach.

36 https://www.britishcouncil.in/programmes/schools/commonwealth-connection

3.4 Lebanon

3.4.1 Schools programming

Lebanon had the largest CCGL programme in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with 56 international partnerships with UK schools and over 3500 teachers, headteachers and policymakers reached. CCGL has enabled continuous professional development for teachers, school leaders and policymakers to address gaps in global learning and integrating skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, digital literacy, global citizenship, and leadership into the curriculum (British Council, 2021).

A prolonged period of crisis since 2019, including economic upheaval, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut Port explosion in 2020, have deeply affected the economic, social and education systems of the country (Human Rights Watch, 2022). The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has launched a five-year plan (2020–2025) aimed at reforming the education system, and the British Council is supporting these efforts through Schools Connect.

Building on previously established, long-term relations with the Centre for Education Research and Development (CERD), policy dialogues have been taking place since March 2020 between the two organisations and MEHE on how to continue technical support under the curriculum reform workplan.

The British Council is also supporting CERD in the design of teaching and learning materials and the delivery of Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions to support capacity development of school leaders, in alignment with the goals and guidelines established by the Lebanon General Education Plan 2021–2025 (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2021).

3.4.2 Cultural relations outcomes

CC and CCGL programming in Lebanon was well received and had a significant impact on participants. Reports and feedback from stakeholders support the conclusions of programme evaluations (British Council, 2021). The design of trainings and other activities, however, followed a more traditional, unidirectional approach, with no evidence of processes of co-design or deep dive into local needs and priorities. In fact, in some contexts and communities less exposed to international initiatives, interviewed stakeholders expressed the concern that cultural relations programming can be viewed as threatening cultural identities and traditional values. British Council local staff reflected that increasing engagement and sensitisation efforts with parents and communities from the design and onset stages of initiatives them can help increase local buy-in. The value of peer exchange and interculturality was perceived further by participants involved in partnerships, but the intrinsic benefits of a cultural relations approach to partnerships at policy level have not been highlighted by available evaluations.

Current planning of Schools Connect seems strongly focused on policymaking and improvement of school ecosystems, but mutuality and exchange of effective practices and knowledge between the two countries are not evident from programming.

IO 1 – Individual level changes: Improved skills, attitudes and behaviours for individuals taking part in activities, be they pupils, teachers, and other school stakeholders, such as school leaders, or policymakers.	There are direct testimonies and anecdotal evidence of how engaging in schools' programmes has enhanced teachers' and students' morale and motivation and supported them to build connections and understanding with different people and cultures.[37]
IO 2 – Learning community and education quality: Improvements in the school ecosystem and education quality in the classroom through capacity building, internationalisation, peer exchanges and sharing of effective practices based on mutual learning and global expertise.	According to the British Council evaluation, CC has significantly contributed to the improvement of teachers and leaders' capacity on core skills in public schools. The Instructional Leadership Course was particularly effective in improving teaching methods, helping teachers implement assessments and creating inclusive classroom environments. This in turn resulted in an improvement in students' performance (British Council, 2021).
IO 3 – School system and policy reform: Increased dialogue and collaboration between policymakers and partner governments to support improvements in education policy.	The relationship between the British Council, the CERD and MEHE has resulted in close collaboration on national education policies. Despite this, there is no specific research or policy paper that frames all the policy engagement activities that British Council has carried out in Lebanon so far within a cultural relations approach.

37 Interview with a British Council school partner in Lebanon (Interview ID 4).

3.5 Kenya

3.5.1 Schools programming

The school programming in Kenya (first under CC, then CCGL) has run since 2007 with an objective of transforming the national education system, build capacity of school leaders and teachers to develop and build core and foundational skills in young people, create more inclusive and open societies, and increase young people's opportunities.[38]

The British Council has been actively supporting the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Kenya in several curriculum reform initiatives. Since 2015, it has worked closely with the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development (KICD), the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), providing technical assistance for embedding core skills in the curriculum across all subjects and progressing the core skills across the levels of learning, including assessment. Moreover, it contributed to the design of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), including through the Training of Trainers (ToT), that cascaded methodologies for implementing the CBC in the whole country (Ipsos & Learn More, 2022). Additionally, UK expertise has been employed in providing technical assistance since 2020 for the creation of Kenya's first Competency Based Assessment Framework to complement the development of the CBC.

Continuous professional development activities have focused on core skills and digital literacy, which is a key focus of the Kenyan curriculum.

The current Schools Connect programming aims at expanding and improving the offering of the Skills for Schools workstream, both through enhanced collaboration with the MoE and other relevant stakeholders and CPD for teachers and school leaders in the field of Digital Literacy and Information Technology. The MoE seeks British Council's assistance in achieving digital literacy goals. According to one KII,[39] a scoping study conducted by British Council highlighted the need for further teacher capacity building in coding, addressing ICT infrastructure challenges, and fostering community collaboration for sustainability. The British Council has currently partnered with the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (CEMASTEA) to create coding teaching materials and courses for capacity building among middle school teachers.[40]

The British Council also aims to become a thought leader on Gender Equality in Education in Kenya through leading research initiatives (Oyinloye, Mkwananzi, & Mukwambo, 2023) and participating in global and regional conferences on the subject.

Finally, the country programming aims to sustain international collaboration between some of the oldest as well as newest school partnerships – some going far back as over 20 years.

38 https://www.britishcouncil.co.ke/programmes/education/connecting-classrooms
39 Interview with a British Council staff in Kenya (Interview ID 4).
40 Interview with government stakeholder in Kenya (Interview ID 13).

3.5.2 Cultural relations outcomes

The intrinsic value of working with schools through a cultural relations approach is evident in Kenya, where the long-lasting collaboration with MoE and other key education stakeholders has positioned the British Council as a prominent player in the education sector. With the explicit goal of transforming the education system, the British Council has put UK expertise in contact with Kenyan experts and policymakers to shape policies and influence all levels of education reforms. Current programming builds on previous experience and expertise to enrich the offering and embracing relevant global issues such as gender equality in education. However, the mutual benefit of the partnership has not yet been systematically researched. Further evidence is needed to highlight how the UK education system is benefitting from the knowledge exchange with Kenyan experts and stakeholders.

IO 1 – Individual level changes: Improved skills, attitudes and behaviours for individuals taking part in activities, be they pupils, teachers, and other school stakeholders, such as school leaders, or policymakers.	Evidence from CCGL evaluation shows that the programme had a positive impact on both teachers and students in terms of improved competences, attitudes, and skills, resulting in increased global awareness and understanding of different cultures and backgrounds (Ipsos & Learn More, 2022). Current programming aims at sustaining school partnerships.
IO 2 – Learning community and education quality: Improvements in the school ecosystem and education quality in the classroom through capacity building, internationalisation, peer exchanges and sharing of effective practices based on mutual learning and global expertise.	Evidence shows that CCGL's training of school leaders fostered improvement in school management strategies, teacher performance and methodologies, classroom management and innovation in teaching methods. Exchange and sharing of effective practices with Kenyan expertise was evident in the design of the CBC and the ToT (Ipsos & Learn More, 2022). Current programming foresees a careful co-design of teaching materials and courses with national education stakeholders and MoE. This will ensure ownership and buy in at all levels of the school environment.
IO 3 – School system and policy reform: Increased dialogue and collaboration between policymakers and partner governments to support improvements in education policy.	At the national level, policymakers in Kenya acknowledged the great impact that CCGL had on efforts to reform the education system. The British Council's active participation in the co-design of the Competency-Based-Curriculum (CBC), alignment and complementarity among CBC contents and CCGL training contents, and the active role of CCGL-trained teachers in championing, through a peer learning approach, the CBC's adoption in classroom practice, are all key features of programme implementation. Qualitative evidence gathered confirms CCGL helped introduce core skills in national curricula and schools, influencing the ongoing education reform process. There is also evidence of awareness among teachers and school leaders of the positive impact of the combined CCGL and CBC trainings. The programme created a cohort of teachers and school leaders who are aware of the importance of core skills, which in turn influenced national interventions and policymaking. Current Schools Connect programming aims at enhancing policy dialogue at regional level by placing British Council Kenya at the forefront of research and analysis on gender equality in education.

3.6 France

3.6.1 Schools programming

The British Council works with a wide range of schools across France through projects, events, courses, workshops and digital resources and platforms. The added value of the cultural relations approach is evident since the long-lasting ties with France's MoE, cultural stakeholders and school system ensure design and implementation of school programmes that are well received, relevant for both countries, and aligned within wider cultural interventions.

Developed in partnership with France's Ministry of Education and Youth, the Franco-British version of Schools Connect focuses on two main strands of activities: capacity building for teachers and UK-France partnerships; and school exchanges.

Virtual partnerships are run digitally and connect primary schools in UK and France to work collaboratively on relevant global topics (the River of Hope programme on Climate Change and Sustainability education), often in the framework of broader art and culture initiatives (Spotlight on UK Culture, Stronger Together, Topical Talks).

Two blended guided partnerships are currently active between UK and France Schools: Leeds and Lille, and Wales and three regions in France. Lille and Leeds have been twinned for over 50 years, working together on various Arts, Education and Business Projects. During the current school year (2023–24), as part of the Leeds 23 years of culture celebrations, the British Council, Leeds 2023 and the Institut Français are linking 23 schools in Lille and Leeds to help them build relationships and work together on various projects, from Language to Climate Change.

Starting in February 2024, the British Council Guided Partnerships programme will link schools in Wales with schools in three French regions to help them develop partnerships and work together on projects relating to sport.

Schools Connect activities in France are framed within a wider and deeper network of programming, that involves several cultural partnerships and strategic alliances. An MoU between the two respective Ministries of Education was recently renewed. The British Council – which facilitated the agreement – is identified as supplier for the shared set of joint activities.[41]

3.6.2 Cultural relations outcomes

There is a lack of systematic collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative evidence on the impacts of working with French schools through a cultural relations approach. This was already pointed out in previous research on Cultural Relations and Schools (British Council, 2022). Anecdotal evidence suggests that working through a cultural relations approach in French schools has undoubtedly brought added value in terms of opportunities for individuals, promotion of mutual understanding and peaceful relations, as well as improvements in both school ecosystems and policy reforms. This is testified by the over 50 years of collaboration among schools and the adaptation of Schools Connect in a Franco-British version.

41 Interview with BC in-country staff in France (Interview ID 23).

3.7 Spain

3.7.1 Schools programming

British Council's education work in Spain focuses mostly on higher education through exchanges – such as Going Global, double degrees and the Erasmus programme. The main feature of British Council work in schools in Spain is the Bilingual Education Programme (BEP), launched in 1996 with the Ministry of Education to provide access to a bilingual and bicultural education for children across Spain. BEP is based on the model of the British Council School in Madrid, which was established 80 years ago to offer bilingual and bicultural education for students aged 2–18 years. Given the completely different scope and modality of this programme design and delivery when compared to Schools Connect, as well as its uniqueness in relation to more easily comparable workstreams of programming throughout all the other countries, Spain is considered out of the scope of the present study.

4 Conclusions, Lessons Learned, Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

With their focus on strengthening collaborations and partnerships to address global challenges in learning and beyond, cultural relations can provide a unique added value to the international education field. Fostering global competences, mutual understanding and openness to other cultures and ideas can play an important role in today's increasingly polarised world, helping to address increasingly complex global challenges.

Evidence of cultural relations' value in education remains limited and largely anecdotal. There is scope to further add to the debate and research landscape by designing programmes that integrate an assessment of results in the short, medium and long term. This would be highly beneficial to the cultural relations' field, and to current thinking on international education.

All other cultural institutions in our sample largely conceptualise cultural relations through education as language learning and international exchanges at the tertiary level. The British Council has a singular approach in the landscape, by focusing on cultural relations through schools. This approach is unique due to: i) the underlying principles of **mutual benefits and long-term partnerships**; ii) the focus on **supporting primary and secondary education** through most programming; and iii) its organisational commitment to cultural relations, as well as its position of autonomy from government. On the one hand, this leads to a sustaining of already existing and long-standing partnerships with other governments, that can support the UK's policy priorities and its standing on the international stage. On the other, it provides an avenue to tackle global challenges in education and other areas, supporting international collaboration and development goals, and progress towards the SDGs. **This approach aligns closely with the UK government's recent stance on international development collaboration, and the growing focus on mutual partnerships to tackle global challenges.**

4.2 Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned 1: While cultural relations through schools holds potential for positive changes at the individual and systems level, there is limited robust evidence on benefits to participants and to education systems.

There is overall positive feedback from participants on collaborations applying a cultural relations approach to education. Many of the changes brought about by cultural relations approaches are, by design, difficult to measure. Further innovation and exploration of potential measurement methods is needed to create a more robust evidence base on the added value of cultural relations as an approach, potentially supporting and informing its wider application to education work. This remains an under-researched field and participants' voices could be further brought to the fore. Existing studies are limited in scope, often including small samples and relatively anecdotal evidence. Evidence has focused more on the skills developed through cultural relations activities, rather than on underlying principles of trust and mutuality. Further evidence could be generated on short-term and medium-term benefits to participants of cultural relations activities, including through longitudinal studies, larger-scale surveys, and qualitative research.

Lesson Learned 2: Mutuality is a key underlying principle of cultural relations in schools, with some unexplored potential for implementation in practice.

The value of mutuality underlying the cultural relations approach is appreciated by partners in the education space. However, there is potential to build a truly mutual and egalitarian approach to education, further moving away from a unidirectional understanding of capacity building and

knowledge-sharing in education. This entails; i) further taking into account local priorities in all aspects of programme design and delivery; ii) collecting and reflecting on further evidence on the perceptions of cultural relations programmes among stakeholders in all partner countries, including how principles of mutuality fit therein; and iii) promoting a recognition of mutual benefit particularly among high-income countries, including the potential to learn from innovations emerging from LMICs.

Lesson Learned 3: Although the British Council appears to have a unique and central focus on cultural educations through schools, there is potential to reinforce collaborations with organisations that align with its mission and vision.

Among our sampled organisations, the British Council emerged as the organisation most closely aligned with a cultural relations approach to education. However, other cultural institutions, such as the Goethe-Institut, presented important similarities and potential synergies. Therefore, further collaboration with organisations that are aligned with (at least) key elements of the cultural relations approach could add to overall development and innovation within the cultural relations space, including in programming through schools.

Lesson Learned 4: With its long-standing experience and know-how, there is potential for the British Council to be an even more prominent actor and thought leader in the cultural relations through education space.

When considering the increased focus on mutuality and collaboration as part of international development policy, the British Council can support programming, knowledge generation and dissemination that is closely aligned with donor priorities going forward. This evidence base could support a more inclusive, mutually beneficial and egalitarian international system for education. Further research and collaboration could reflect on the power dynamics that underlie global relations and partnerships in education, with potential to learn from past and ongoing collaborations. A key strength in this regard, compared to traditional ODA actors, are the long-standing ties developed by the British Council's in-country offices.

4.3 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen measurement and evidence building on both intrinsic and instrumental value of cultural relations in schools.

The British Council is uniquely placed to contribute to the global evidence base on the effects of applying a cultural relations approach to education programming. Further research with direct participants in schools and across partner governments – including in the UK – could help quantify and understand the value of this approach, including on the mutuality of the benefits accrued.

In practice, this should mean ensuring all projects are linked to the overarching cultural relations framework and that they have clear MEL plans, including data collection with stakeholders and participants. The British Council could build on its long-term in country partnerships to follow up with members of its alumni community, gathering data on their long-term trajectory and personal stories on how in cultural relations activities supported them in the process. Where possible, the British Council could identify strategic programmes to pilot more robust methods, such as counterfactual approaches and larger-scale data collection among participants, as well as metrics to capture changes in soft skills and attitudes. Finally, a stronger focus on process evaluations could strengthen the evidence on the 'how', and not just the 'what' of cultural relations. As an indicative benchmark, we recommend allocating between 5 and 10 per cent of each project budget to MEL, following industry guidelines.[42] For high-priority learning areas, to support adaptation and iteration, or to work in particularly complex environments, the British Council could consider allocating a higher budget, closer to the end of that range, or even beyond 10 per cent of the budget.[43] Ultimately, the exact budget will depend on availability of evidence, evaluation design and strategic priorities (Lagarde, Kassirer, & Lotenberg, 2012).

Recommendation 2: Design programmes and partnerships that truly reflect the spirit of mutuality.

There is increasing appetite in the international education space for truly mutual learning partnerships, and the UK cannot play its part in addressing internal and global challenges without being itself more open to knowledge from other countries. There is appetite among UK Government Departments for approaches which strengthen collaboration, and which bring added value to the UK education system and its broader society. The British Council is uniquely placed to add to these efforts. To do so, we recommend investing in evaluating added value to UK students of international partnership and learning programmes. We also recommend investing in raising awareness of the importance of cultural relations through education in the UK setting, potentially increasing demand for internationalisation within the UK. This will mean further publicising all the important work cultural relations work in schools and its potential among UK partners, helping to support a truly Global Britain.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen collaboration with global players, the Goethe-Institut specifically, identifying areas of synergy and tapping into each other's networks of expertise.

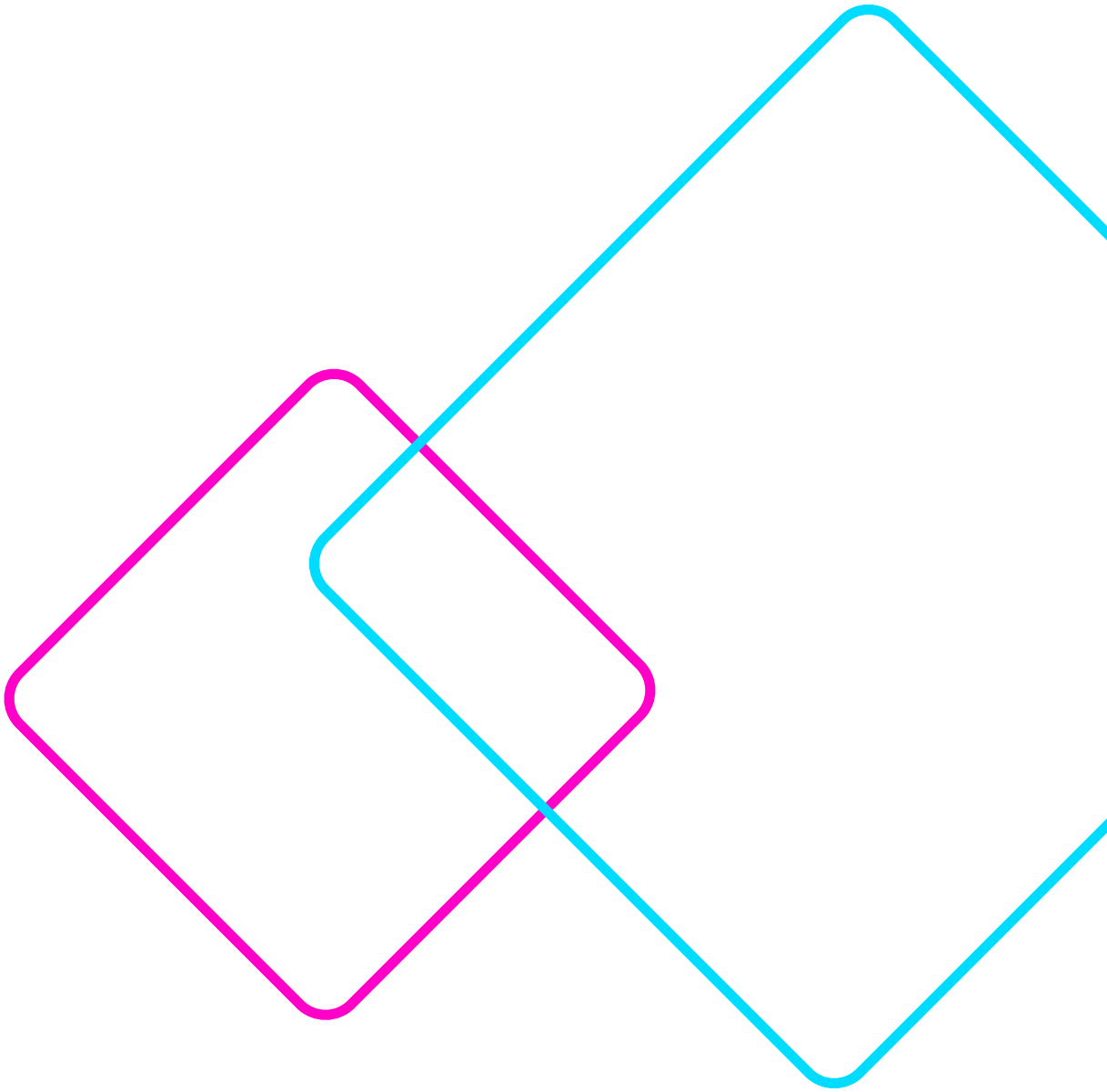
There is potential for the British Council to be more collaborative with other cultural organisations that have similar approaches, organisational missions, and underlying values. Among the organisations in our sample, the Goethe-Institut emerged as the most closely aligned with the British Council's way of working, and the one with the most potential for further collaboration in the future. We recommend exploring potential synergies and partnerships with the Goethe-Institut, particularly in relation to education programming. This could not only add value in terms of the global debate on cultural relations through schools, but also offer avenues to further tap into EU funding and collaboration. The British Council could also carry out a broader landscape mapping of other private and non-profit organisations across the globe, to assess whether other partnerships in this field are also worth exploring.

42 See, for example, guidelines from USAID, PEPFAR and MEASURE Evaluation: https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/publications/ms-07-20-en/at_download/document and EvalCommunity: https://www.evalcommunity.com/hire/budgeting-for-meal/

43 Additional useful resources include a 2016 Guidance from the United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour: https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/DRL-Guide-to-Program-Monitoring-and-Evaluation.pdf and a 2016 guidance from Itad and FCDO (formerly DFID): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a312d8e5274a31e0001b5a/Value_of_Evaluation_Discussion_Paper_-__Final_Version_for_Publication_03082016_clean.pdf,.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen internal Knowledge Management to add value to the global debate.

Through investment in evidence building and internal capacity building, there is potential for the British Council to become true thought leaders and the go-to institution for international education programming that features a cultural relations approach. The British Council's approach to mutually beneficial partnerships, joint priority setting, and its strong focus on capacity building and curriculum development are aligned with recent debates in international education and international development. This means the British Council could be a particularly effective partner for the UK government going forward if it successfully taps into and communicates its existing knowledge base. This process will entail asking challenging questions about effective inclusivity of practices, power dynamics inherent to ODA programming, and sharing knowledge about what has gone well, and what has gone less well in promoting cultural relations through education.



Annex 1: Methodology

This research study collates evidence from secondary and primary data to define and understand the value of cultural relations through schools. The study includes both evidence from the British Council's own work, and a landscape mapping of other cultural organisations' conceptualisation and application of the cultural relations approach in their education programming.

The research objectives of the study were refined in consultation with the British Council during the Inception Phase of the project, and are as follows:

- **To conduct a thorough analysis of the British Council's work with schools**, assessing its efficacy in enhancing the UK's educational profile abroad and its influence in partner countries.
- **To gather empirical evidence** on the long-term benefits for UK and partner country school-aged children resulting from their engagement with international learning and partnerships. However, while the impact on students in partner countries was a matter of investigation in interviews, the research study did not interview school headteachers or teachers in the UK that could provide primary data on the positive impact of international education programmes for UK students, and this aspect is explored by analysing academic research on the theme.
- **To explore the features of the British Council's initiatives that most effectively leverage cultural relations** for educational advancement, yielding influence, trust, and sustainable relationships with global communities.
- **To compare the British Council's methods and outcomes with those of similar institutions** and position it within the broader spectrum of cultural relations and international education.
- **To discern the operational dynamics and soft power influence** of other cultural organisations, recognising the evolving landscape of international educational and cultural engagement.
- **To provide actionable insights** that can support the British Council in asserting its distinctive capacity to foster educational links and cultural understanding, reinforcing its role as a vital entity for championing the UK's educational and cultural diplomacy.

1.1 Research Design and Approach

The data collection consisted of three phases: a desk review, country case studies or 'deep dives', and a cross-cutting analysis.

In conversation with the British Council, Learn More sampled the following countries for the research: **Albania, China,**[44] **Brazil, France, India, Kenya, Lebanon and Spain**. Countries selected differ in terms of geographic region, high-middle- and low-income status, political landscape, use of digital technologies and historical ties to the UK. The sample captures a breadth of cultural contexts and educational priorities, providing a rich comparative perspective on the British Council's global educational impact. Starting from the British Council's own definition of cultural relations,[45] the research assessed how this approach is contextualised in the British Council's education programming in each sampled country, identifying success stories and challenges. Through a high-level assessment of cultural relations in education across different cultural institutions, and a deep dive within the British Council's work in different countries, this study provides a working definition of cultural relations in international educational contexts.

The comparative analysis of practices in cultural relations approaches to working internationally on education includes analysis of programming by the **Alliance Française, Institut Français**, the **Goethe-Institut** and the **Instituto Cervantes**. These organisations were selected in that they are the main counterparts to the British Council in their respective countries and for their longevity. We

44 Please note that while China was included in the initial sample, we have removed it due to a lack of British Council programming focusing on schools in the country. We have, however, utilised evidence on the Mandarin Excellence Programme in our discussion of the added value of international education programming for students in the UK.

45 'Cultural relations are understood as reciprocal transnational interactions between two or more cultures, encompassing a range of activities conducted by state and/or non-state actors within the space of culture and civil society. The overall outcomes of cultural relations are greater connectivity, better mutual understanding, more and deeper relationships, mutually beneficial transactions and enhanced sustainable dialogue between people and cultures, shaped through engagement and attraction rather than coercion.' (British Council & Goethe Institut, 2018).

initially attempted to include the Confucius Institute in primary data collection, but we did not succeed in securing interviewees with its staff (see Section 1.3 below on Limitations).

1.2 Data Collection

1.2.1 Initial Desk Review and Consultations

The research design was refined following:

- An initial desk review of the British Council's internal and external existing documentation to contextualise the study and to identify gaps to fill through primary data collection activities.
- Initial consultations with the British Council's Senior Staff to dive deeper into the British Council's strategic objectives regarding school programming and to understand their vision for the research's output.

1.2.2 Desk review

The desk review systematically gathered, synthesised, and analysed existing literature, reports, and data relevant to the British Council's cultural relations approach in education.

The desk review encompassed the following categories of documents:

- British Council's recent internal documents such as reports, strategic plans, and programme evaluations from 2021–2023.
- Peer-reviewed academic articles, studies, and research papers focusing on cultural relations in an educational setting and cultural relations more broadly.
- Grey literature, which includes publications from NGOs, governmental agencies, and international organisations related to cultural relations and international education.
- Media reports.
- Statistical databases that offer global and regional data on education, cultural programmes, and related metrics.

1.2.3 Initial Consultations

At the start of the research, key British Council staff were consulted to understand the strategic objectives of the British Council with regards to working internationally with schools and its cultural relations approach.

The following themes emerged from initial consultations with British Council staff:

- **Inputs underlined the purpose of the British Council in promoting international awareness through its cultural relations approach**. Interviewees emphasised that while some programs like Active Citizens and Erasmus Plus have been discontinued due to resource constraints, programs like the Connecting Classroom through Global Learning (CCGL) and its continuation, Schools Connect, have had positive impacts on the relationships between UK and partner countries and students in these countries.
- **Some interviewees also shared their scepticism around the digitalisation of cultural relations activities and its inability to effectively influence schools programmes' impact, or bilateral relationships between the UK and partner countries, as compared to face-to-face physical activities.**
- Respondents shared expectations of the research outcome, which was useful in refining our research approach and methodology. Most interviewees wanted **to learn about the larger approach and activities that make the British Council distinctive from other cultural organisations in the world through this research**.
- **Some interviewees emphasised the importance of questioning whether schools' programmes and development programs can complement each other, while others feel they should be separate objectives.** One interviewee raised the question of whether redirecting funds from small-scale development projects towards cultural relations activities, which are central to the British Council's mission, might be a more effective use of resources.

- **The interviews highlighted limited resources, absence of evidence of the cultural relations initiatives and a shift away from mobility as some of the challenges encountered by the British Council in implementing programmes.** A hortage of funding was highlighted as a major concern for the prioritisation of programs at the British Council. The interviews revealed concerns about striking a balance between different aspects of international education, including TVET, Schools Connect, and English language lessons, within the available resources. Another challenge is a lack of evidence of the impact of the cultural relations approach beyond anecdotes, and therefore an ability to achieve buy-in from funders and partner schools. The shift from international mobility since the pandemic, according to some interviewees, has also reduced the impact of the cultural relations initiatives for all stakeholders, specifically in affecting learning outcomes and teacher training opportunities.
- **There was divergence around the role of digital solutions within cultural relations activities.** Some expressed scepticism on the impact of digital cultural relations whereas others see it as indispensable. While still an unexplored path, some interviewees agreed on the need for and importance of incorporating digital into programme design while some referred to it as merely a 'buzzword with very little impact.' Apprehensions exist around the shift away from face-to-face interactions concerning the programme's impact, outreach, and cultural relevance. Through digitalisation, there is a benefit of reaching schools beyond capital cities, but the impact of such activities beyond their outreach potential is still to be validated.

1.2.4 Key Informant Interviews

The Learn More team carried out 30 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) out of the 58 respondents contacted. This included:

- **British Council Staff:** These individuals are integral to the conceptualisation, delivery and review of British Council activities in partner countries, with a focus on programmes undertaken within schools. Their feedback shed light on the British Council's internal mechanics, strategic decisions, and country-specific adaptations and dynamics.
- **British Council Partners and Stakeholders:** This category includes external collaborators and stakeholders and their views enriched the understanding of the British Council's broader impact, the strength of its partnerships, and opportunities for further cooperation.
- **Other Cultural Organisations**. The Learn More team interviewed staff members from other major organisations working on cultural relations or soft power, such as the Goethe-Institut, Instituto Cervantes, and Institut Français. The team also attempted to interview staff members of the Confucius Institute but were unsuccessful.

Data collection was conducted remotely between November 2023 and early February 2024 by a team of three researchers. The interviews served to:

1. Understand the opportunities and challenges of implementing the cultural relations approach when working with schools.
2. Acquire direct accounts of British Council programmes' successes, tangible impacts, and potential improvements.
3. Inspire strategic recommendations for the British Council's initiatives.
4. Gain knowledge on how similar organisations operate in the selected countries and globally.

Interviews notes and transcripts were analysed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) that was carried out during regular meetings among the researchers to discuss recurring themes and identify patterns and emerging trends.

The Learn More team developed topic guides for respondents based on the Research Framework for the study. Topic guides are included in Annex 3.

1.2.5 Country deep dives and cross-cutting analysis

The research entailed case studies on seven countries where the British Council operates and implements its school programmes, with a particular focus on cultural relations. The aim of the interviews was to gather a detailed account of these practices across the seven selected countries, understand the activities of other organisations in the same space, and offer insights for improving future operations.

This qualitative research highlights the strengths of the British Council's approach and where there might be opportunities for growth in different contexts, ensuring the British Council can continue to develop its school programmes effectively. The intention is to use the findings not only to enhance the British Council's own strategies but also to contribute to the general understanding of effective practices in educational and cultural collaborations internationally.

1.3 Limitations

The research study presents some limitations, which should be taken into consideration when reviewing its findings. The limitations we encountered are as follows:

1. **Low responsiveness:** Despite ambitions to include respondents from seven countries and four cultural organisations outside of the British Council, response rates from potential respondents were low. Despite several attempts, it was not possible to achieve our intended sample of British Council in-country staff members, partner organisations (including schools and government representatives) in all countries. Furthermore, it was not possible to obtain an interview with any representative from Confucius Institute. As such, our primary evidence for the country case study on France, Albania and Spain has been limited. We have mitigated for this by expanding the focus on the literature and secondary data review yet the evidence remains sparser than anticipated, and British Council staff members are over represented. A specific focus on data collection with in-country partners is recommended for future studies.
2. **Scope of Countries and Programmes:** The research focuses on a selected number of countries and specific education programmes of the British Council and other main cultural organisations. This limitation means that the findings may not fully represent the entire spectrum of the British Council's global activities. The results should be contextualised within the specific regions and programmes studied, and caution should be exercised when generalising to other contexts or initiatives.
3. **Scope of Comparative Organisations:** This research focused only on main governmental organisations and organisations that work at 'an arm's length' from the government. Non-profit organisations such as the Tony Blair Institute and AIESEC and for-profit organisations such as Education first, even though they conduct programming that can fit our definition of a cultural relations approach in schools, are outside the scope of this research.
4. **Quantitative Data Constraints:** Given that the study largely draws on qualitative methods and that there is an acknowledged scarcity of quantitative data, the research was not able to statistically assess the impact and effectiveness of the British Council's activities. This constraint emphasises the exploratory and strategic nature of the study rather than providing conclusive statistical evidence.
5. **Subjectivity and Biases in Qualitative Analysis:** While qualitative research offers rich and detailed insights, it also introduces the element of subjectivity. The interpretations and conclusions drawn from interviews and qualitative content are influenced by the researchers' perspectives and understanding, which might introduce biases. Moreover, as most key informants have been identified following advice from the British Council staff, this has potentially created a biased sample.
6. **Dynamic Nature of Cultural Relations:** Cultural relations and educational diplomacy are dynamic fields, influenced by ongoing global events, political changes, and societal shifts. This research, while current at the time of study, may not fully capture the continually evolving nature of international relations and the long-term impacts of the British Council's activities.

Annex 2: Research Framework

Topic	Research Questions	Data Sources
Cultural Relations Theory	What existing literature describes cultural relations and represents a definition of cultural relations or outlines a cultural relations approach across the British Council? What is the impact of cultural relations (and international partnerships and learning between schools) on education systems and institutions and on individuals (teachers and pupils) in partner countries?	Academic journals, previous studies, British Council reports.
	How have global educational practices been influenced by cultural exchanges and international relations?	Educational databases, global education reports, international education case studies.
	What theoretical frameworks in the literature support the concept of cultural relations in education?	Academic theories, cultural relations models, sociological research.
British Council Strategic Objectives	What strategic objectives does the British Council have for its cultural relations approach in education? What are British Council objectives specific to selected countries?	British Council strategy documents, programme reports, internal evaluations, Interviews with British Council staff
	How are these strategic objectives reflected in the school-based programmes and initiatives undertaken by the British Council?	British Council programme documentation, partnership agreements, activity reports.
	How does the British Council define 'successful' cultural relations strategies? How does this definition vary across contexts?	British Council programme documentation, Interviews with British Council staff and partners in selected countries.
	What evidence exists in British Council documentation that demonstrates the impact or success of these cultural relations strategies?	British Council internal evaluations, feedback reports, outcome summaries.
Programme Implementation	What benefits have been observed by British Council staff in the partner countries as a result of school-based international partnerships?	Interviews with British Council staff and stakeholders selected countries.
	Which activities have been most effective in fostering long-term relationships and trust?	Interviews with British Council staff and stakeholders in the selected countries.
	How is the cultural relations approach tailored in different countries, and what factors contribute to differences across countries?	Interviews with British Council staff and stakeholders, comparative analysis between responses from different countries.

Topic	Research Questions	Data Sources
	What implementation challenges are faced in each context, and how are they overcome?	Interviews with British Council staff, British Council programme documentation.
	How has the British Council incorporated digital technology in its cultural relations strategies?	Interviews with British Council staff, digital strategy documents.
Measurement and Enhancement	How do British Council staff in different countries measure the success of implementing cultural relations initiatives?	Interviews with British Council staff, internal evaluation reports.
	What recommendations do British Council staff have for enhancing the cultural relations approach in the schools' portfolio?	Interviews with British Council staff.
Adaptation and Mutual Respect	How does the British Council adapt its cultural relations strategies in response to differing cultural, political, and educational landscapes in partner countries?	Interviews with British Council staff and partners, strategy documents, programme adaptations.
	In what ways do British Council programmes promote mutual understanding and respect among students of different cultural backgrounds?	Interviews with British Council staff and partners, programme curriculum, participant feedback.
Global Perspectives	How do British Council staff perceive the role of cultural relations in shaping global perspectives and attitudes toward the UK?	Interviews with British Council staff and stakeholders.
Competitive Landscape	How do the cultural relations strategies of the British Council compare with those of similar organisations, such as Instituto Cervantes, Alliance Française, etc.?	Comparative analysis, literature review, websites of similar organisations.
	Are there notable collaborations or tensions between the British Council and similar cultural relations organisations? How do these relationships influence their operations?	Interviews with British Council staff and representatives of similar organisations, media reports.
	What effective practices can the British Council adopt from other cultural organisations to improve its own cultural relations strategies?	Interviews with industry experts, comparative analysis, strategy documents from other organisations.
	How do similar organisations leverage technology in their cultural relations and educational programmes, and what innovative digital practices can the British Council learn from or adopt?	Interviews with representatives of similar organisations, technology usage reports, case studies of digital cultural programmes.

Annex 3: Topic Guides

Initial Consultations Topic Guide

Presentation

1. To help contextualise our discussion, could you please describe your current role within the British Council and if and how your responsibilities intersect with the British Council's cultural relations approach in education?

British Council Strategic Objectives and Vision

2. Could you outline the primary strategic objectives that motivated the British Council to commission this research on international cultural relations in schools?
3. How do you envision the outcomes of this research? What forms of impact or change would you like to see initiated by the findings?

Current Programmes and Initiatives

4. What are some flagship initiatives that the British Council currently operates which embody your cultural relations approach in education?
5. Are there any recent or upcoming programmes or initiatives that you believe should be highlighted in this research?

Challenges and success stories

6. What are the most significant challenges the British Council has encountered in embedding cultural relations in international schoolwork?
7. Could you share any standout success stories or instances of unmet objectives, and the key learnings from these experiences?

Cultural Sensitivity and Policy Alignment

8. How does the British Council ensure its programmes are culturally sensitive and respectful of the diversity in the school communities it engages with?
9. In what ways do your programmes align with or adapt to the educational policies of the UK and partner countries?

Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback mechanisms

10. How are different stakeholders (e.g., students, educators, local communities, MoEs) involved in the development and execution of your cultural programmes?
11. Could you describe any existing feedback mechanisms that allow stakeholders to communicate their experiences and insights back to the British Council?

Resource Management

12. How does the British Council's approach resource allocation for its international educational programmes, and are there challenges in this process you believe the research should consider?

Interactions with Similar International Agencies

13. How does the British Council typically interact or collaborate with similar agencies or organisations internationally (e.g., Goethe-Institut, Alliance Française, Cervantes, Confucius)? Are these interactions more project-based or do they form part of a longer-term strategic partnership?

Innovation and Future Directions

14. Are there innovative methods or technologies the British Council is considering or has begun integrating into its cultural relations initiatives in education?
15. Looking towards the future, how do you anticipate the British Council's cultural relations approach evolving in the international education space?

Communication and Advocacy

16. How does the British Council communicate the value and successes of its international school programmes to external audiences and potential partners?
17. Finally, considering the scope of this research, are there specific areas or questions you believe should be emphasised or explored further to ensure the study is as beneficial and aligned with the British Council's objectives as possible?

KIIs Topic Guide – British Council in-country staff

Presentation

1. To help contextualise our discussion, could you please describe your current role within the British Council in [Country]? How long have you been working for the British Council? Do you have any involvement in the country's schools' programmes?

Understanding of Cultural Relations

2. How would you define the concept of 'cultural relations' in the context of the British Council's work within schools?
3. Can you provide specific examples of how cultural relations theories underpin the British Council's Schools programmes?

Application and Examples of Impact

4. Could you describe how the cultural relations approach is applied in your school programmes, particularly in [Country]?
5. Can you share any notable outcomes or success stories that highlight the added value of the cultural relations approach in your work? In what way has the approach added value in these cases?
6. What do you believe is the added value of this approach, not only to [Country], but also to the UK?

Effective Practices and Comparative Analysis

7. What are some instances of particularly effective practices or initiatives that have been driven by the cultural relations approach, either within the British Council or in other organisations (add specific organisations depending on the country) you are aware of?
8. How does the British Council's approach to cultural relations in schools compare with that of other similar organisations operating in [Country]? Is there anything that sets it apart, and why?

Challenges, Strengths, and Weaknesses

9. What challenges have you encountered in implementing a cultural relations approach within Schools programmes? How did you mitigate or address these challenges?
10. In your opinion, what are the current strengths and weaknesses of the global cultural relations landscape, especially in the context of educational programmes? How do they affect the British Council's work?

Significant Contributions and Future Opportunities

11. To what extent do you believe the British Council has made a significant difference in promoting cultural relations through its work with schools in [Country]? In what ways?
    Probe: how the British Council's cultural relations approach has helped build and maintain trust and mutual relationships through school education between the UK and [Country]?
12. What strategies would you recommend for further embedding cultural relations principles across the British Council's schools work?
    Probe: Are there specific tools, resources, or support that would enhance the effectiveness of cultural relations integration?

Additional Insights

13. Is there anything else you would like to add or emphasise that hasn't been covered in our discussion, but is crucial for understanding the cultural relations approach in international schools' work?
14. Do you have any questions for us?

Recommendations for further interviews

15. Could you suggest any other individuals within or outside of the British Council who you believe could provide additional valuable insights? Would you be able to facilitate an introduction or provide contact information for these suggested individuals?

KIIs Topic Guide – British Council partners

Overview of Partnership:

1. Can you describe your/ your organisation's partnership with the British Council? What are the primary objectives and activities of this collaboration?

Perception of Cultural Relations:

2. At the moment, BC defines cultural relations as 'reciprocal transnational interactions between two or more cultures encompassing a range of activities conducted by state/ non-state actors within the space of culture and civil society.' From your perspective, what defines cultural relations, within the context of educational initiatives and programmes?
3. How visible and explicit is the British Council's cultural relations approach in the projects and initiatives they implement?

Impact and Value Addition:

4. In what ways has the cultural relations approach been evident in the outcomes of the projects you've undertaken with the British Council?
5. Can you provide any specific examples where the cultural relations approach significantly added value to the programme outcomes or impacted the participants like students, teachers, school system or wider community?

Comparison with Experiences with other cultural organisations:

6. How does the British Council's approach to cultural relations compare with your experiences with other similar organisations or programmes?
7. Are there unique aspects of the British Council's approach that stand out in your experience?

Challenges and Opportunities:

8. Have there been any notable challenges or hurdles in the implementation of programmes underpinned by a cultural relations approach?
9. What opportunities for strengthening cultural relations in the context of education do you think are not yet fully leveraged by organisations like the British Council?

Recommendations for Improvement:

10. Based on your experience, what recommendations would you offer for enhancing the integration and effectiveness of the cultural relations approach in the British Council's schools' portfolio?
11. Are there areas where the British Council can improve its collaboration with partners like your organisation to better foster cultural relations?

Future of Cultural Relations:

12. Looking towards the future, how do you see the role of cultural relations evolving in international educational programmes?
13. What steps should the British Council take to remain at the forefront of this evolution and continue making a meaningful difference?

Additional Perspectives:

14. Is there any other feedback or insights you believe are important for the British Council to consider, especially concerning cultural relations in education?

KIIs Topic Guide – Other Cultural Institutions

Presentation:

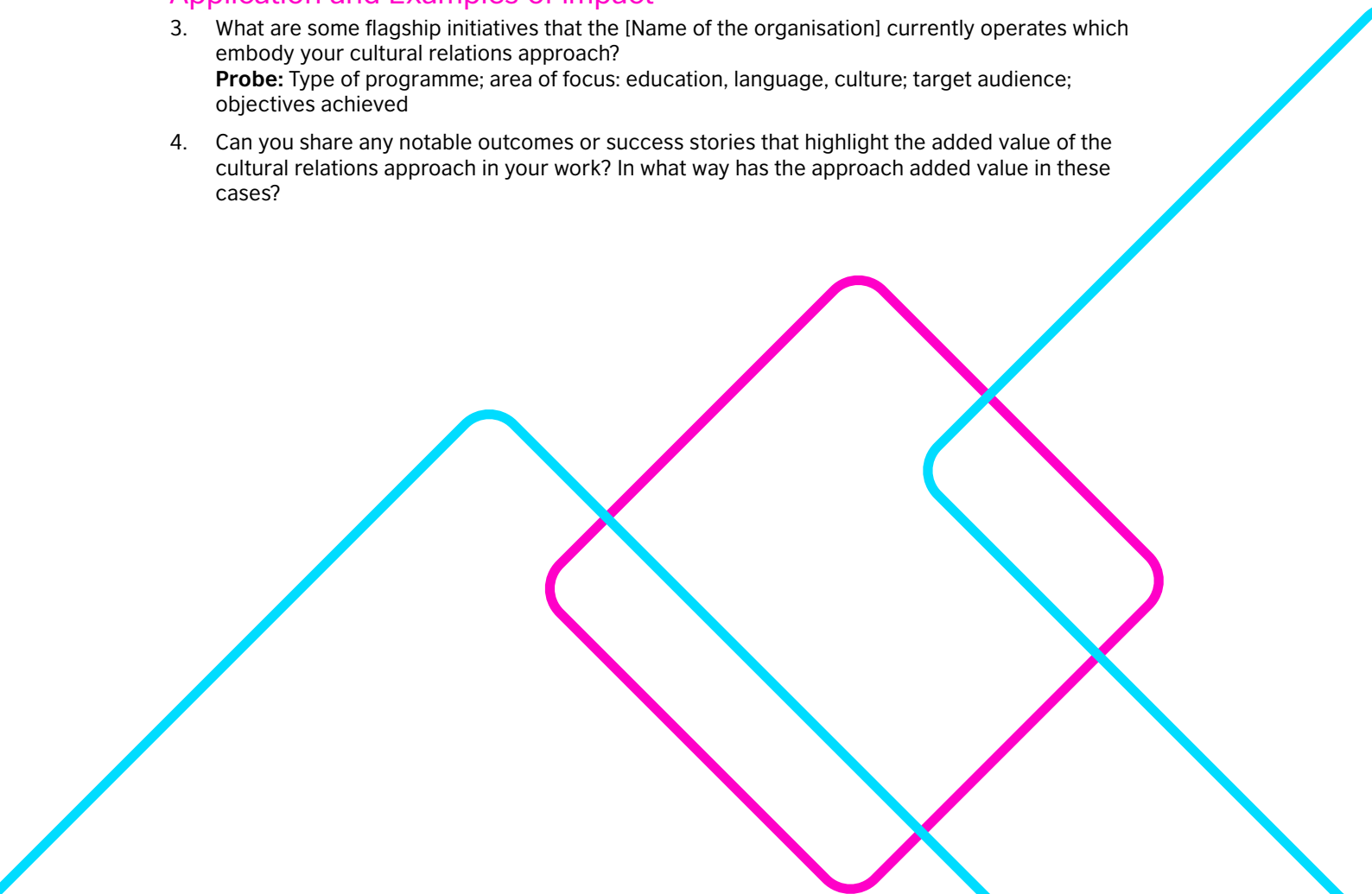
1. To help contextualise our discussion, could you please describe your current role within the [Name of the organisation] and if and how your responsibilities intersect with the organisation's work within cultural relations?

Perception of Cultural Relations:

2. How do you and your organisation define 'cultural relations' within your programmes? What is the objective of the organisation in using this approach?

Application and Examples of impact

3. What are some flagship initiatives that the [Name of the organisation] currently operates which embody your cultural relations approach?
   Probe: Type of programme; area of focus: education, language, culture; target audience; objectives achieved
4. Can you share any notable outcomes or success stories that highlight the added value of the cultural relations approach in your work? In what way has the approach added value in these cases?



Challenges, Strengths and Weaknesses:

5. What are the most significant challenges the [Name of the organisation] has encountered in embedding cultural relations in their programmes? How did you mitigate or address these challenges?

Cultural Sensitivity and Stakeholder Engagement

6. How does the [Name of the organisation] ensure its programs are culturally sensitive and respectful of the priorities of the partner countries, ensuring cultural relevance?
7. Who are the stakeholders involved in the development and execution of your cultural programmes?

Effective Practices and Comparative Analysis

8. How do you think your organisation differs in its approach from other cultural organisations?
9. Does it interact or collaborate with similar agencies or organisations internationally (e.g., British Council, Goethe-Institut, Alliance Française, Cervantes, Confucius)? If yes, what has been the impact of these collaborations?

Significant Contributions and Future Opportunities

10. To what extent do you believe the [Name of the organisation] has made a significant difference in promoting cultural relations through its work and in what ways?
    Probe: how the organisation's cultural relations approach has helped build and maintain trust and mutual relationships between countries?
11. Are there innovative methods or technologies the [Name of the organisation] is considering or has begun integrating into its cultural relations initiatives in education?

Additional Insights

12. Is there anything else you would like to add or emphasise that hasn't been covered in our discussion, but is crucial for understanding the cultural relations approach in your organisation's work?
13. Do you have any questions for us?

Recommendations for further interviews

14. Could you suggest any other individuals within or outside your organisation who you believe could provide additional valuable insights based on the stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of programmes? Would you be able to facilitate an introduction or provide contact information for these suggested individuals?

Annex 4: List of Respondents

Initial Consultations with British Council HQ Staff

Name	Position
Christine Wilson	Director Research & Insight
Mark Herbert	Global Head Schools, TVET & NFE
Jonathan Stewart	Country Director, Northern Ireland
Maddalaine Ansell	Director of Education
Vicky Gough	Schools Advisor
Ruth Cocks	Country Director, Wales
Shannon West	Principal Consultant, UK schools

Interviews with in-country British Council staff, relevant in-country stakeholders, and partners

Interview No.	Country	Organisation	Stakeholder Type
1	Lebanon	British Council	BC in country staff
2	Lebanon	British Council	BC in country staff
3	Lebanon	British Council	BC in country staff
4	Lebanon	Mahammad Shamel Public School	School partner
5	Lebanon	Freelance Education Consultant	School partner
6	Lebanon	Kfarhatta Secondary Public School	School partner
7	Lebanon	Centre for Education Research and Development	Government partner
8	India	British Council	BC in country staff
9	India	British Council	BC in country staff
10	India	Ramjas Public School	School partner
11	India	Independent Education Consultant	School partner
12	Kenya	British Council	BC in country staff
13	Kenya	Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA)	Government partner
14	Spain	British Council	BC in country staff
15	Albania	British Council	BC in country staff
16	Albania	British Council	BC in country staff
17	Brazil	British Council	BC in country staff
18	Brazil	British Council	BC in country staff
19	Brazil	British Council	BC in country staff
20	Brazil	British Council	BC in country staff
21	Brazil	British Council	BC in country staff
22	China	British Council	BC in country staff
23	France	British Council	BC in country staff

Interviews with staff from other cultural organisations

Interview No.	Organisation
24	Alliance Française
25	Goethe-Institut
26	Goethe-Institut
27	Goethe-Institut
28	Institut Français
29	Cervantes Institute
30	Cervantes Institute

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Cultural Relations in Schools: Evolving Practice for a Globalised World

Published by the British Council

British Council
1 Redman Place
Stratford
London
E20 1JQ 2022

www.britishcouncil.org/research-insight

To cite this report:
Learn More. (2024). *Cultural Relations in Schools: Evolving Practice for a Globalised World*. British Council. https://doi.org/10.57884/VHX8-GG95

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Available online at: **www.britishcouncil.org/research-insight/cultural-relations-schools**